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ABSTRACT

This writing skills curriculum provides Adult Basic Education (ABE) teachers with a perspective on intended writing goals for their ABE students, delineates specific writing objectives, and presents a framework within which writing activities can effectively take place. Introductory material provides a guide to the use of the curriculum and suggests the following steps: take a student writing sample, list desired outcomes, determine priorities and sequences for activities, construct a teaching plan, and prepare materials. Next, an overview of the goals of writing instruction for adult students is presented, which includes criteria for writing evaluation and considerations for teaching. Part I then lists the basic generic skills students need to write effectively and enumerates specific learning outcomes for students at three skill levels. This section also charts the application of generic and particular skills with respect to various teaching situations, and provides advice for the development of a teaching plan. Part II focuses on instruction planning, including information on (1) the preparation of the appropriate learning environment; (2) the composing process, which involves pre-writing, writing, and revising; and (3) ways of developing tools and resources for teachers and students, with focus on the mechanics of writing, vocabulary development, and evaluation. It also lists appropriate resources. Appendices include a sample teaching plan, a glossary, and various illustrative materials. (HB)

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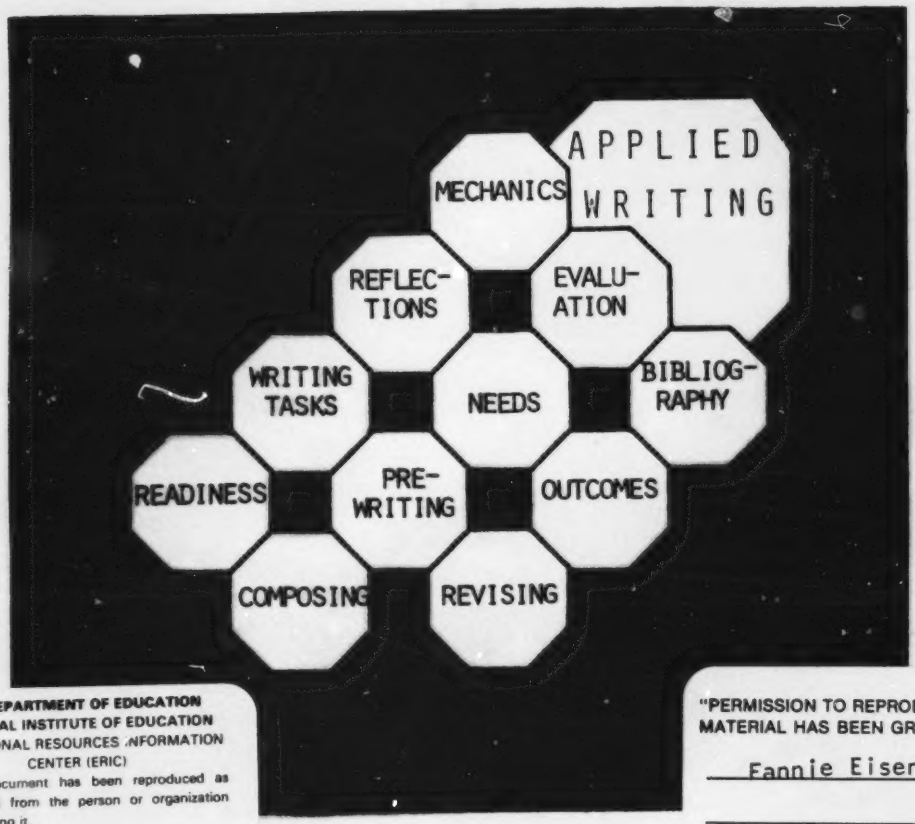
APPLIED WRITING

A WRITING SKILLS CURRICULUM FOR ADULT LEARNERS



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SECOND FIELD TEST EDITION

NEW YORK CITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE, CUNY
DIVISION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

JC 810 498

SECOND FIELD TEST EDITION

APPLIED WRITING: A WRITING SKILLS CURRICULUM FOR ADULT LEARNERS

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C.W.
B.T.A.

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HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM

Teachers do not have to be expert grammarians or great writers to help students improve their writing skills. In fact, Adult Basic Education (ABE) teachers with backgrounds in reading often have developed an understanding of language that will be enormously useful in teaching writing.

This curriculum is organized to provide such teachers with a perspective on intended writing goals for their ABE students, a delineation of specific writing objectives, and a framework within which writing activities can effectively take place. The curriculum stresses the need to view writing instruction as the teaching of a developmental process consisting of three equally important phases, each of which needs development. Suggested activities, tools, and resources are also included to assist teachers in setting their own guidelines for instruction. It is a flexible model for programs, to be adapted as needed; however, a suggested procedure for using the curriculum follows:

1. Skim it to get a perspective.

2. Try some writing activities with your students, e.g., begin journal writing, free writing, or other writing without focusing on correcting.

3. Once you have a group of papers and are familiar with your students' actual writing, read through the curriculum more carefully. Read the Overview and the section on the Composing Process to get an understanding of the process of writing instruction.

4. Then read the other sections of the curriculum to see what specific applications are appropriate to your program needs.

5. Consult the index for specific areas of interest, e.g., beginning level readers.

Writing instruction can begin with all of your students, even those in the first stages of reading. Those who cannot write can dictate their "writing" to a teacher, tutor, or other student to transcribe. This technique, commonly known as the language experience story, is also writing (See Using Language Experience with Adults in the bibliography for further discussion).

After you have samples of your students' writing and have determined the specific writing needs of your students, as a group and individually, consider the following order of procedures using the curriculum as appropriate to each phase:

DIAGONOSE: What can the students write now? Can they write, for example, complete meaningful sentences using conventional punctuation?

TAKE A WRITING SAMPLE

PRESCRIBE: What are realistic expectations? In terms of how long the students may be enrolled in your program, just what and how much can be achieved, mastered, or reviewed?

LIST OUTCOMES

APPLY What do these adults need to write as parents, workers, and community members? Considering the life roles they play, what activities are appropriate? Guide discussions and interviews among students to elicit when they need to write.

DETERMINE ACTIVITIES

SET PRIORITIES: What are the priorities for group and individual instruction? What should be worked on first and what sequence of events should follow?

CONSTRUCT TEACHING PLAN

DIVERSIFY: How can these adults learn most effectively? What methods and activities will ensure that if they do not get it the first time, the second time they will?

PREPARE MATERIALS

QUESTION: How can I create the most conducive writing environment? What do I need to help me do it?

PREPARE YOURSELF, THE STUDENTS, and the SETTING

OVERVIEW: THE GOALS OF WRITING INSTRUCTION FOR ADULT STUDENTS

> In an important sense all of our schooling is designed to make us better users of the language...The issue then is not whether writing is better or worse, but how we can make everyone more skillful.
>
> Richard Lloyd-Jones
> Arizona English Bulletin

Adults write for many reasons. Much of the writing we do is purely practical--a checkbook entry, an irate letter to the landlord. But beyond the essential and even automatic exercise of a practical skill, the ability to write gives us other important tools. Writing is one of the most valuable ways to improve our ability to think and understand. It is also a medium--perhaps the greatest medium--for self-knowledge and for communication.

Students in ABE programs have much to gain from effective writing insruction; however, they are often fearful of writing because of past experience. Instead of viewing language learning and communication of written "Standard English" as a foreign territory with unexpected disasters and predictable failure, adult student writers need to learn to make words and language work for them.

GOALS

Extensive research conducted over the last ten years has demonstrated that it is not helpful to view the teaching of writing as the teaching of grammar and correctness. Instead, the teaching of writing should incorporate the phases which constitute the composing process: prewriting, writing, and revising. The goals of writing instruction include helping student writers approach any writing task, from the practical to the esoteric, with skill and confidence. These goals will be met if we can answer yes to an overall, pragmatic question:

IN A WRITING SITUATION, CAN STUDENTS CONSISTENTLY DO THE FOLLOWING?

Write reasonably clear sentences, relatively free of mechanical errors and expressing clear thought

Write fluently

Organize their ideas and develop them coherently

Write for different purposes and in different forms as determined by diverse audiences

Adjust style and tone for diverse circumstances

Use resources for aid as needed (e.g., dictionaries, handbooks.)

Perform written tasks needed in everyday life

Too often, adult basic writing students are regarded as "disabled" or needing "remedial" instruction. Instead, a developmental approach is needed. Although some adult learners have learning disabilities, most do not. These adult students are learners whose skill needs have to be identified, nurtured, and developed. They can do what is essential to writing intelligible communications. They just have to be directed toward how. Writing needs to be viewed as a developmental vehicle for thinking and communication, a vehicle which is manageable rather than out of control. Teaching activities need, therefore, to be directed toward the development of analytical language ability and an understanding of the functions of the words and sentences one uses in relationship to what one wants to say.

Methodologies to teach writing vary, but if a teacher does nothing else but the following with a positive, constructive attitude, writing skill will improve. The benefits will be so obvious that most teachers will want to expand instruction and time for writing.

1. Require some writing every day, from the first class meeting.
2. Use students' papers as "texts" frequently.
3. Provide for sharing and responding to students' papers frequently.
4. Teach correctness in context, not as isolated skills.
5. Evaluate whole pieces of writing by responding positively and limiting corrections to one or two points per writing.
6. Integrate reading with writing as often as possible.
7. Write with students.

A survey of the recent literature on writing reveals some of the following reflections.

REFLECTIONS

Theory

...Writing involves thinking and should be taught that way; one reflects, then expresses, then better expresses.

...Writing is a craft developed through consistent and repeated practice.

...Skills involved in producing written products, once acquired, can be applied to most writing tasks.

...Textbooks may not be needed to teach writing; instead use student writings.

...Student writers should learn and review writing mechanics and generic skills in context, not in isolation.

Organization of Instruction

...Writing experiences for adults should integrate their life experience and practical needs as students, community members, and workers.

...Providing adequate questioning and directive guidelines (rather than simply correcting papers) will guide students to find their own errors.

...We should create a positive writing environment within the classroom: set aside a specific time for writing, provide an area with resource materials, and assess student and teacher attitudes toward writing.

...Discussion about writing is essential to the process of learning how to write.

Writing Activities

...In designing writing tasks we should find ways to provide for students to practice writing for different purposes and various audiences.

...Teachers can accommodate diverse skills levels by simplifying tasks for lower level students; i.e., adjust time spans for assignments, number of tasks, and complexity.

...Students need to be encouraged to develop a writing vocabulary culled from their own lives and from their writing experiences.

...Some writing ought to be fun.

Evaluation and Response

...Student writers should be diagnosed for current writing skill ability upon entry into a program and subsequently evaluated throughout the course of the program.

...Students need consistent positive response and encouragement after writing.

...Writing is better evaluated by whole writing samples rather than simply by objective testing which does not demonstrate whether a student can actually write a sentence relatively free of mechanical and other errors.

...Students' writing skill and progress are aided by sharing and responding to their writing during the various phases of development.

PART ONE

SETTING OBJECTIVES

One of the best ways to determine the writing needs of adult learners and to design writing tasks for them is to ask the students themselves. They may respond that their needs are:

"to improve my punctuation and phrasing"
"to improve my spelling and penmanship"
"to write to my minister"
"to write flyers for my tenant patrol"
"to spell for my typing class"
"to develop my vocabulary"
"to communicate about community problems"
"to take messages"
"to write clearly and faster"
"to write in all subjects"
"to write letters to my friend"
"to communicate with my classmates"
"to copy"
"to put down ideas without looking back to see how many mistakes I've made"
"to be able to use precise and concise language in school; elegant, funny, and expressive words socially; and to write memos on my job."

A wide range of adult basic writing needs is evident. The authors of these quotations, ABE students, understand, or at least sense, the significance of writing as the ongoing and conceptual process it is. They just need help as they go through it. These adult students enroll in ABE programs primarily for improved literacy. They have a wealth of life experience to draw from and want to communicate more effectively. They want to have the opportunity to write the language they speak. Thus, basic development of skills in written communication should be inherent in any program that intends to assist learners toward personal progress.

I. GENERIC SKILLS

In order for adults to compose lists, write notes and letters, prepare reports, or otherwise communicate in writing, they need to acquire generic skills--the basic skills which are common to most writing tasks. An efficient or skillful writer can use these generic skills for whatever particular writing tasks may be required. Students' writing efficiency can be analyzed in terms of how skillfully they can use the generic skills to complete an applied writing task.

The following list includes the basic generic skills student writers need in order to write skillfully, regardless of the specific writing tasks. They are listed sequentially in order of complexity, but note that they are not mastered in that order.

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR WRITING

1. To develop a positive attitude toward writing
2. To distinguish vowels and consonants
3. To distinguish between printing and cursive writing
4. To copy letters, words, and numbers
5. To write from dictation
6. To write lists and categorize them
7. To arrange words in alphabetical order
8. To identify common prefixes, suffixes, and base words
9. To use capitalization
10. To construct statements, questions, and commands
11. To distinguish clauses, phrases, and sentence parts
12. To use punctuation in sentences correctly and for emphasis
    a. terminally: periods, interrogation marks, and exclamation points
    b. internally: commas in series, connectors, transitional words, interrupters, parenthetical elements, sets of information (titles, dates, and addresses), letter closings
13. To use synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms
14. To spell correctly
    a. from memory
    b. using a dictionary
    c. distinguishing homonyms
15. To use subjects with verbs and to make them agree
16. To distinguish how different kinds of words function (i.e., subjects, verbs, connectors, and modifiers
17. To vary sentence structure for emphasis and length
18. To combine sentences using coordination and subordination
19. To write answers to questions
20. To compose and combine paragraphs
    a. to state main ideas
    b. to use details for development
    c. to use examples, facts, incidents, description, and comparison/contrast

21. To indent paragraphs
22. To outline
23. To write with set time limits
24. To record observations
25. To write about articles, literature, and students' writings
26. To use descriptive language
27. To use figures of speech
28. To summarize class lessons and readings
29. To write concretely
30. To think and write abstractly
31. To distinguish objective from subjective writing
32. To select themes and limit topics
33. To write for a specific purpose: to explain, to describe, to persuade, and to narrate
34. To adjust and control tone for different audiences
35. To develop a personal style
36. To develop standards for self-criticism and revision of writing
37. To adapt various organizational principles for different tasks
38. To maintain a clear focus throughout an essay
39. To organize ideas logically
40. To use resources: dictionaries, thesauruses, handbooks, encyclopedias, Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, and other indexes

The following supplementary lists are arranged according to three levels and intended for more specific identification of minimal skills' areas which need review. These individual models are not exclusive. Some skill areas from the B list might be incorporated into the A list, if appropriate to a particular group or to an individual student, or vice versa. They are simply suggested as the least a lower level, middle level, or higher level student ought to be able to do. It is also assumed that if all of the skills on list A and B are mastered, then the student begins with list C. If they are not mastered, then review the more basic skills as well. These lists are primarily intended to provide a focus for comprehensive review when properly applied to a writing activity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES - A

PROFILE: Intended for ABE students who read between 0 - 3 grade levels, as determined by

a. a standardized diagnostic reading test and/or
b. a diagnostic writing sample and diagnosed as a beginning level student writer with a holistic score of from 0 - 2 (See diagnosis and prescription sample)

1. To develop a positive attitude toward writing
2. To distinguish vowels and consonants
3. To distinguish between printing and cursive writing
4. To copy letters, words, and numbers

5. To write from dictation
6. To write lists and categorize them
7. To arrange words in alphabetical order
8. To identify common prefixes, suffixes, and base words
9. To use capitalization
10. To construct simple statements, questions, and commands
11. To use punctuation in sentences correctly and for emphasis
    a. terminally: periods, interrogation marks, and exclamation points
    b. internally: commas in a series and apostrophe for contractions
12. To use simple synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms
13. To spell correctly
    a. from memory
    b. using a dictionary
    c. distinguishing homonyms
14. To use simple subjects with simple verbs
15. To use resources: dictionaries

LEARNING OUTCOMES - B

PROFILE: Intended for ABE students who read between 4 - 6 grade levels, as determined by

a. a standardized diagnostic reading test and/or
b. a diagnostic writing sample and diagnosed as a middle level student writer with a holistic score of from 3 - 4 (See diagnosis and prescription sample)

1. To develop a positive attitude toward writing
2. To spell correctly
    a. from memory
    b. using a dictionary
    c. distinguishing homonyms
3. To use prefixes, suffixes, and base words
4. To distinguish names of words and their functions
5. To construct sentences for variety, emphasis, and different lengths
6. To use punctuation in sentences correctly and for emphasis
    a. terminally: periods, interrogation marks, exclamation points
    b. internally: commas as connectors, interrupters, semi-colons, colons, hyphens

7. To combine sentences using coordination and subordination
8. To make subjects and verbs agree
9. To write answers to questions
10. To compose paragraphs
    a. to state main ideas
    b. to use details for development
    c. to use examples, facts, incidents, description, comparison/contrast
11. To indent paragraphs
12. To outline
13. To write with set time limits
14. To record observations
15. To write about articles, literature, and students' writings
16. To write for a specific purpose: to explain, to describe, to persuade, and to narrate
17. To use resources: dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopedias, handbooks etc.

LEARNING OUTCOMES - C

PROFILE: Intended for ABE students who read between 7 - 8 grade levels or above, as determined by

a. a standardized diagnostic reading and/or
b. a diagnostic writing sample and diagnosed as an upper level student writer with a holistic score of from 5 - 6 (See diagnosis and prescription sample)

1. To develop a positive attitude toward writing
2. To construct and combine sentences
3. To compose and combine paragraphs
    a. to state main ideas
    b. to use details for development
    c. to use various methods for development
4. To use descriptive language
5. To use figures of speech
6. To summarize class lessons and readings
7. To write concretely
8. To think and write abstractly
9. To distinguish objective from subjective writing
10. To select themes and limit topics
11. To write for a specific purpose: to explain, to describe, to persuade, and to narrate

12. To adjust and control tone for different audiences (to use formal and informal language)
13. To develop a personal style
14. To write with set time limits
15. To develop standards for self-criticism and revision of writing
16. To adapt various organization principles for different tasks
17. To maintain a clear focus throughout an essay
18. To organize ideas logically
19. To use resources: dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopedias, Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature

II. APPLIED WRITING

In order for adults to learn how to write more efficiently, they have to practice writing by application, not by isolated exercising. A connection has to be made between what they learn in school and their life skill needs. As has been stressed earlier in this curriculum, if students acquire the basic generic skills, they will be better able to write and to compose most needed written communications. The following charts reflect the application of such skills to particular writing situations.

Please note the following as these charts are used:

1. For a number of applied writing tasks, similar generic skills are listed.

2. The applications are organized according to practical life areas relevant to adult students, and are best understood when viewed in terms of the role students play in each life area.

3. Recognize that each writing task always has an audience and a purpose. For example, if students have to make shopping lists, their audiences are themselves and their purpose is to make lists they can actually use when shopping i.e., to inform themselves. On a job, however, they may have to make lists to inform someone else.

4. The generic skills are the learning outcomes listed in the master list in the previous section. The particular skills refer to the more specific skills or knowledge required by the particular application.

APPLIED WRITING - LIFE SKILLS MASTER CHART

I	II	III	IV	V
Personal	*Consumer*	*Occupational*	*Social*	*Educational*
1. messages	1. lists	1. addresses	1. addresses	1. schedules
2. notes	2. applications	2. lists	2. lists	2. applications
3. journals	3. checks	3. schedules	3. greeting cards	3. note taking
4. letters	4. information	4. messages	4. records	4. records
5. requests	5. letters	5. memos	5. flyers	5. outlines
6. dialogue	6. change	6. applications	6. minutes	6. dialogue
7. poetry		7. time sheets	7. letters	7. summaries
		8. records	8. requests	8. to remember or clarify
		9. job descriptions		9. content area writing
		10. outlines		10. reports
		11. information		11. essays
		12. letters		12. writing about writing
		13. change		
		14. summaries		
		15. evaluations		
		16. reports		
		17. resume		

LIFE SKILLS CHART I

PERSONAL

Application	*Generic Skills*	*Particular Skills*
1. Writing messages	Copying; writing from dictation; using punctuation (commas, periods, interrogation marks); using capitalization; writing names; constructing sentences and sentence parts (phrases and clauses); using abbreviations; recording time and writing dates.	Ordering information; using details and main ideas; writing for someone else.
2. Writing notes	Copying; constructing sentences; using punctuation (commas and periods); using capitalization.	Writing main ideas; using details; ordering information; adjusting to purpose and audience.
3. Writing journals	Writing dates; constructing sentences; using punctuation (periods, commas, and apostrophes in contractions); recording observations.	Writing for self to self; using informal language; ordering information; developing personal style; using subjective writing.
4. Writing letters 5. Writing requests	Writing dates, constructing sentences; using capitalization; using punctuation; using spelling; composing paragraphs; writing addresses.	Using informal conventional letter format; using informal language; adjusting to purpose and audience.
6. Writing dialogues	Constructing sentences, phrases, and exclamations; using punctuation (commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, colons, dashes, periods, exclamation points and parentheses); using margins; indenting statements; using contractions.	Using informal language; using underlinings for emphasis; identifying italics; understanding setting, characterization and conflict.
7. Writing poetry	Choosing precise language; constructing varied phrases and sentences.	Using figurative language; using titles; using descriptive language; using rhyme, rhythm, and meter; using repetition of sounds.

LIFE SKILLS CHART II

CONSUMER

Application	*Generic Skills*	*Particular Skills*
1. Making lists	Distinguishing consonants and vowels; using spelling; using margins	Categorizing information; ordering columns
2. Completing applications	Writing names and addresses; using capitalization; writing numbers in dates, and phone numbers; using cursive writing	Writing answers to questions, using details; supplying personal data
3. Writing checks	Writing numbers in number and and word form; distinguishing between printing and cursive writing; writing dates; writing names; using capital letters	Using spatial conventions
4. Requesting information 5. Writing letters 6. Writing suggestions for change	Constructing sentences using capitalization; using punctuation (commas, colons and periods, exclamation points and interrogation marks); composing paragraphs; writing addresses (capitalization, margins, numbers, commas, titles, and abbreviations)	Using conventional letter format (return address, date inside address, greeting, body, closing signature and typed or printed name); adjusting to purpose and audience; using persuasion

LIFE SKILLS CHART III

OCCUPATIONAL

	Application	*Generic Skills*	*Particular Skills*
1.	Writing addresses	Using capitalization (proper names, titles); writing names; using punctuation (commas, periods); using margins; writing numbers; using abbreviations	Using titles
2.	Making lists	Distinguishing consonants and vowels; using spelling; using margins	Categorizing information; ordering columns
3.	Completing schedules	Writing numbers; writing letters and words; using punctuation (colon, dash); using capitalization	Using details; using spatial conventions
4.	Writing messages	Copying; writing from dictation; using punctuation (commas, periods, interrogation marks); using capitalization; writing names; constructing sentences and sentence parts (phrases, clauses); using abbreviations; recording time and writing dates	Ordering information; using details and main ideas; writing for someone else
5.	Writing memos	Constructing sentences; using punctuation (colons, periods, commas); writing numbers in dates; using cursive initials or signature	Adjusting to purpose and audience; using spatial conventions
6.	Completing applications	Writing names; writing addresses; using capitalization; writing numbers in dates and phone numbers; using cursive writing	Writing answers to questions, using details; supplying personal data
7.	Recording or completing time sheets	Writing names; writing numbers; using punctuation (colon in numbers); using capitalization; using cursive writing	Using spatial conventions
8.	Writing and maintaining records	Using capitalization; writing names	Categorizing and ordering information; using detailed and precise language; using jargon

Life Skills Chart III
Occupational

9.	Writing job descriptions	Constructing sentences; using punctuation; using numbers	Adjusting tone; using formal and descriptive language; organizing information; using active verbs; ordering information; listing steps for procedures; using persuasion
10.	Writing outlines	Using capitalization; writing numbers and letters; using punctuation (periods, commas, semi-colons, brackets and parentheses); constructing phrases and sentences	Using outline conventions; using indentation; ordering information, using main ideas, using details
11.	Requesting information	Constructing sentences; using capitalization; using punctuation (commas, colons, periods, exclamation points, and interrogation marks); using spelling; composing paragraphs; writing addresses	Using conventional letter format; adjusting to purpose and audience; using persuasion
12.	Writing letters		
13.	Writing suggestions for change		
14.	Writing summaries	Constructing sentences; using punctuation; composing paragraphs; writing concretely	Using indentation; using main ideas; using details; ordering information; using contextual vocabulary
15.	Writing evaluations	Constructing sentences; composing paragraphs; using punctuation (periods, commas, semi-colons)	Adjusting to audience; using concrete detail; using strong verbs; using subjective judgment
16.	Writing reports	Constructing sentences; composing paragraphs; using punctuation	Gathering information; selecting and limiting topic; making outlines; writing summaries; note taking; using resource materials; organizing and ordering information; drawing conclusions; using precise language and contextual vocabulary
17.	Writing resumes	Writing names, addresses; using capitalization; using punctuation; (colon, comma, semi-colon, underlining); using phrases; supplying personal data	Using outlining; using concrete detail; using strong verbs; organizing information; using conventional resume layout

LIFE SKILLS CHART IV

SOCIAL

	Application	*Generic Skills*	*Particular Skills*
1.	Writing addresses	Using capitalization; writing names; using punctuation (commas, periods); using margins; writing numbers; using abbreviations	Using titles
2.	Writing lists	Distinguishing consonants and vowels; using spelling; using margins	Categorizing information; ordering columns
3.	Writing greeting cards	Constructing phrases; structuring sentences; using punctuation	Using figurative language
4.	Writing and maintaining records	Using capitalization; writing names	Using detail and precise language; using jargon; categorizing and ordering information
5.	Writing flyers or advertisements	Writing dates; writing names; using capitalization	Using precise language; using visual illustrations; using concrete detail; using persuasion; adjusting to purpose and audience.
6.	Writing minutes	Copying; writing from dictation; constructing sentences; using punctuation	Using outlining; using main ideas; using detail; writing summaries
7. 8.	Writing letters Writing requests	Constructing sentences; using capitalization, using punctuation; using spelling; composing paragraphs; writing addresses	Using informal, conventional, letter format; using informal language, adjusting to purpos and audience.

LIFE SKILLS CHART V

EDUCATIONAL

	Application	*Generic Skills*	*Particular Skills*
1.	Completing schedules	Writing numbers; writing letters and words, using punctuation (colons, dashes, using capitalization)	Particular skills; using details; using spatial conventions
2.	Completing applications	Writing names and addresses; using capitalization; writing numbers in dates and phone numbers; using cursive writing	Writing answers to questions; using details
3.	Note taking	Constructing phrases; using underlining; structuring sentences; rewriting writing; using quotation marks	Using outlines; using lists; organizing and ordering information; using main idea; using concrete detail
4.	Writing and maintaining records	Using capitalization; writing names	Using detail and precise language; categorizing and ordering information
5.	Writing outlines	Using capitalization; writing Roman Numerals; writing numbers and letters; using punctuation (periods, commas, semi-colons, brackets and parentheses); constructing phrases and sentences	Using outline conventions; ordering information; using main ideas; using details
6.	Writing dialogue	Structuring phrases, structuring sentences; using punctuation (quotation marks, colons, commas, periods, apostrophes, exclamation points, dashes, parentheses)	Using indentation; using contractions; using underlining; identifying italics; using setting, characters and conflict
7.	Writing summaries	Constructing sentences; using punctuation; composing paragraphs; writing concretely	Using indentation; ordering information; using contextua vocabulary; using main ideas and details

Life Skills Chart V
Educational

8.	Writing to remember or clarify	Copying, constructing sentences; using punctuation; composing paragraphs	Using main ideas; using concrete details; writing summaries; organizing and ordering information; using contextual vocabulary; drawing conclusions
9.	Writing in content areas (math, social studies, science, literature)	Constructing sentences; using punctuation, writing numbers	Using contextual vocabulary; writing to remember or clarify; using main ideas; using concrete detail; writing reports; writing summaries
10.	Writing reports	Constructing sentences; composing paragraphs; using punctuation	Gathering information; ordering, selecting and limiting topic; outlines; writing summaries; note-taking; using resource materials; organizing and ordering information; drawing conclusions, using precise language and contextual vocabulary
11.	Writing essays	Constructing sentences; using punctuation; composing paragraphs	Using indentation; using descriptive language; sequencing information; using facts; using comparison/contrast; using concrete detail; adjusting to audience and purpose; using main ideas; distinguishing topics from main ideas; using conventional essay format (introduction, body, conclusion)
12.	Writing about writing	Constructing sentences; using punctuation	Using analytical skills; organizing and ordering information; understanding elements of form; distinguishing writing styles

III. DEVELOPING A TEACHING PLAN

The creation of a teaching plan for writing is central to establishing a specific curriculum in writing skill development. Shared among students, supervisors, and teachers, the plan provides an opportunity for discussion of the goals of writing development and enhances the ability of students to understand an object lesson in organization and planning (a conceptual skill they need to acquire). In the teaching plan, individual skills are outlined and then applied to particular situations.

If a plan is discussed with students at the beginning of their participation, they begin instruction with a more informed attitude. The plan helps to provide a clearer perspective on why the students are there and what they hope to do, as well as promoting their active participation.

A teaching plan for writing skills development differs from a diagnostic skills prescription. The prescription details an outline of specific skill areas an individual needs to review and practice, as evidenced by a writing sample or other diagnostic tool. On the other hand, a writing plan is a perspective of intended writing goals for the entire group of students during a particular period of study. Writing skill development is fostered by using both a writing teaching plan and individual diagnostic prescriptions.

Pacing

Although the topics in a plan do generally increase in difficulty as the sequence progresses, the actual sequence is not a simple progression from easy to difficult. In programs that are designed to attract and retain students who have little or no basic educational development, the rhythm of writing activities is critical because, too often, students have been discouraged by study which became more and more frustrating for them as they went on.

It is essential, therefore, to balance several factors throughout the cycle of training. Topics that usually are not overwhelming should be alternated with those that may be frustrating; e.g., a difficult organizational skill unit may be followed by a less formal one. Similarly, teacher-chosen topics and student-chosen topics should also be mixed throughout the cycle. Individual writing tasks might be alternated with group tasks.

The sequence of topics in a writing plan can also be set within respective units of study. For example, generic skills for letter writing can be grouped separately, as can those required for a unit on essay writing. Some of the skills for different tasks are similar. (See applied life skill charts.) Once students acquire the skill to produce one form of writing, they will feel more confident that they can produce another.

Whatever the sequence of study, all plans of instruction should operate under a general principle of good academic preparation; education should lead the learner to intellectual independence. After any lesson or assignment the participant should be able to accomplish the required tasks independently. Therefore, as they move along, assignments, exercises, examinations, and classroom dynamics should place more and more responsibility upon the student.

In developing teaching plans consider: time allotment, program concepts, necessary skill acquisition, methodology, individual and group activities, use of instructional and supplementary media and local resources. Also consider that the plan needs to be flexible and may need to be changed according to student progress.

Constructing the Teaching Plan

It is recommended that teaching plans include sections on description, specific learning outcomes, text materials, applied writing activities, and topical sequence of units of study. (See sample form in appendix.)

In a heterogeneous class of students (a frequent occurrence in ABE classes), two or more plans may be needed. The lower and middle plans may introduce fewer skills, use simpler language, and contain fewer and simpler writing activities. The upper level plans may be cumulative (include the lower level outcomes and add more complex ones), use more complex terminology, and require a greater number of and more complicated activities. For example, while business letter writing is an experience all of the students should have, the lower level students will be given a more simplified situation and circumstances to respond to, and the expectations for the product will be different.

Teaching Plan Description

The description section should introduce the overall purpose of writing skills development. Only one or two sentences are needed to provide a focus.

Materials

The text and supplementary materials to be used during the course of instruction should be listed in the teaching plan with appropriate bibliographic information. The materials can be classified as basic or supplementary. If no text is used, then refer to the students' writings as the text. Also list handbooks, dictionaries, and thesauruses. It is also useful to give students a separate list of supplementary reading and reference materials, as is often the practice in college courses. This list, referred to as an independent reading and reference list, can serve to promote independent reading habits and actually direct students toward useful resources. Different forms could be included appropriate to their levels, e.g., short stories, fables, specific authors, as well as The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature or encyclopedias. It could be called AN ADULT LEARNERS' GUIDE TO RECOMMENDED READINGS. It should contain high interest, low readability readings, as well as some more challenging ones.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes, performance objectives, specific objectives, and other such terminology serve to identify the basic skills educators hope their students will achieve. They basically define what knowledge, understanding, and skills the learners are expected to learn and demonstrate when requested. The difference among them, if there is one, is more a matter of semantics than anything else. The level of rhetorical complexity used in phrasing writing outcomes is best determined by program needs, student populations, and teacher preferences.

ABE students with their wealth of practical experience begin writing instruction with varying levels of competence. They may know how to use simple punctuation efficiently but be unable to coordinate sentences. They may be able to write a brief note but be unable to order an item from an advertisement. They may be capable of very sophisticated and complex discussion, but be unable to write a clear sentence.

How they master the outcomes or in what order is dependent upon how the skills are put into practice and what they individually need to develop. Several skills may be acquired through one assignment, while other skills may take much longer. What is significant is that all ABE students should at least review the generic outcomes, practice them within a context appropriate to their levels, and practice those they individually need the most help with. Decisions regarding individual and group priorities should be made after the students' present skill levels have been evaluated by using a writing sample.

Regardless of how learning outcomes are worded, writing outcomes and their related activities have to be geared toward helping the student writer become increasingly independent. Concentration on mastery of isolated skills tends to inhibit independent progress rather than enhance it. Therefore, the wording of outcomes should reflect a particular skill area to be practiced, but in terms of an appropriate contextual whole, i.e., an applied writing task. Learning outcomes are not ends in themselves.

Writing Activities

The number of writing experiences students have is significant in relationship to the fact that student writers need practice--the more the better. *THEY NEED TO WRITE AS MUCH AND IN DIFFERENT WAYS AS THEY CAN.* It is difficult and probably not necessary to calculate the number of words a student should write per day or per week, although studies have shown that students who write more progress more. The most essential point about how much writing ought to be done is that some should be done every day.

A focus on quality and quantity is important in determining how many and what kinds of assignments are made. Although students need to sample many different kinds of writings, they also need to have the opportunity to rewrite their writing. In planning writing activities consider the particular program situation, different skill levels, diverse interests, cultural backgrounds, dialect interference, and individual teacher preferences as appropriate to the particular population. It is preferable to think of samplings of many kinds of practical writing experiences which lead to independent functioning. It is suggested that ABE students do, AT LEAST, some of each of the following:

1. *List construction*
2. *Journal writing*
3. *Memo writing*
4. *Letter writing*
5. *Dialogue writing*
6. *Essay writing*
7. *Report writing*

Some ABE students may have NEVER written anything, or little more than a few words. Lower level students, particularly, also need specific practice in fine motor coordination, i.e., the specific forming of letters and the contact with a writing instrument, as well as the consistent increased familiarity that comes with seeing, reading, and thinking about language. Middle or higher level students, on the other hand, may be required to write longer pieces or to write for longer periods of time.

The number of writing experiences in any one particular form can be increased as skill level increases. As students become more skillful, they may need less time to complete an assignment; however, it can also work the other way. A student who is more skillful may want to do more with an assignment and thus require more time.

Both individual and group writing activities should be planned. Students need responses from different audiences. They also need to practice writing in class and out. Diverse approaches should also be offered to allow for diversity of learning modes, i.e., what works for one does not necessarily work for another. A particular assignment, therefore, may yield different results. Having resources available helps to provide for such differences. Have several ways ready for teaching a particular kind of writing task.

Writing practice should give students opportunity to be concrete and to relate their own experiences to conceptualize its meaning. They know how they see the world and need to have the opportunity to make connections with how they think and what they say. They have to be directed toward becoming more sensitive to themselves, their thoughts, their environment, and their life roles.

The adult writers' experiences form a major part of the content for developmental writing skill study. Resources for writing content also include visits to local museums, libraries, community art shows, newspaper offices, newspaper readings, etc. Integrating various writing resources provides for an enlarged and integrated practical communication experience.

Writing with set time limits enhances students' writing development. By having to limit the scope of topics written about within a particular period of time, they get a chance to develop their thinking processes in relationship to the writing process. They have to have practice in writing less or more according to different demands. They should begin writing for short periods of time and build up, e.g., free writing for 10 minutes and later for 20.

Overall, writing activities are best designed using as many diversified approaches as possible but should include:

1. *Doing some each day*
2. *Requiring different forms using different stimuli*
3. *Setting time limits*
4. *Providing for group and individual experiences*
5. *Considering writing activities in terms of audience, purpose and process*

Scheduling Time for Writing

Is there time for writing? There should be because writing fits in so well across the curriculum. Writing activities related to reading and other subject areas are easily organized. The time scheduled for writing per se need not be long. Instead, consider how writing experiences fit into a daily or weekly schedule. Actively integrate in and out of class writing for variety. In a daily session that incorporates other basic skill development, set aside specific times for writing and ensure that writing is also done while doing other subjects, e.g., writing answers to math problems using complete sentences or explaining how a process works in science.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE: 2½ - 3 hour session

Free Writing	10 minutes
Peer Group Discussion	10 - 15 minutes
Math - some writing	1 hour
Reading - some writing	1 hour
Journal	15 minutes

PART TWO

PLANNING INSTRUCTION

I. READINESS

> It is the business of a writing class to make writing more than an exercise, for only as a writer rather than as an exerciser, can a student develop the verbal responsiveness to his own thoughts and to the demands of his reader that produces genuinely mature syntax.
>
> Mina Shaughnessy

Adults are often afraid to write because they are not accustomed to writing, and because, in their experience, writing was usually taught not as a process, but as a series of exercises which were supposed to allow them to create a product. This product was graded, returned, and frequently forgotten. Little time was set aside to aid students as they wrote. Teachers' and students' roles and attitudes, as well as the setting in which writing took place, were often stilted and not conducive to studying writing. Too much emphasis was placed on correctness before fluency.

Writing must be taught as both a thinking process and as a craft, a skill that is learned and developed. In order to begin and maintain a successful writing program, the teacher, the students, and the environment must be readied. Roles, attitudes, atmosphere, and provisions must be considered, analyzed, and prepared.

The Teacher

In order to foster a more positive writing environment, teachers must consider the role they play within the writing environment. Instead of being figures of authority who demand written products, mark them up, and then return them, they must recognize that writing is a complex process. Its phases are nurtured by enthusiasm, positive encouragement, different audiences, careful listening and realistic expectations. Teachers also need to write with students and to be open to their evaluation of their own work. By working with students, as a member of the writing group, teachers encourage student development by showing them that writing is work, even for them.

The Students

Adult student writers can learn to write better by developing an awareness of their roles as they write for particular purposes and within specific contexts: at home, as parents, they may need to make lists or write letters or notes to their children's teachers; in community life, as members of clubs or organizations, they may want to be the spokespersons for local events and need to write a speech; at a job, as workers, a letter or memo may have to be produced, as well as a resume and letter to acquire the job; and in school, as students, they need to compose essays, reports, and outlines. It is helpful to direct students to discuss their preceptions of what they do when they are writers and how they feel about writing. Questionnaires, questions, summaries of writers' thoughts about writing, and group publications serve as useful devices for clearing the air of attitudes which may inhibit writing and encourage purpose for writing (see appendix for samples). An additional way to foster positive attitudes is to give the student writers a group identity. A name can be selected by the members, e.g. Carole's Writers' Community.

The Environment

Writing skill development cannot take place in a stilted setting which is not conducive to free expression. Naturally the kind of setting you are given determines, to some degree, what you can do with it. It is helpful if the following things are done:

1. Teachers should get away from desks and move about while students are writing and sit within the group when they are writing with them.

2. Semi-circles or circle arrangements facilitate discussion and listening. When small groups are needed, it is easier to pair up people from such an arrangement. Sometimes this is not easy. Students may be afraid to face each other and commit themselves more to a writing situation. Usually charm, persistence, and active involvement help.

3. The room should be decorated and supplied with appropriate charts, information, provisions and stimulating materials. (See provision list that follows.)

The atmosphere or prevailing mood and feelings must be open. It is essential that all feel comfortable to communicate in a purposeful way. At the first class meeting which often sets the mood for the remaining sessions, try to incorporate the following suggestions:

1. Discuss the writing process from the beginning. Ask students to define writing, orally or in writing, and get them to describe their fears, anxieties, and apprehensions. Beginning level students also need to discuss ways in which they can begin writing without being fearful about how it may come out. Such group discussions foster confidence, break down barriers, and contribute to making the group more cohesive.

2. Facilitate discussion about the following:

   a. Written products have their own energy and dynamics which they, the students, create.

b. Writing is a physical, mental, and emotional experience which is improved by SEEING language more; therefore they have to write a lot.

c. Pieces of writing have purposes, a reason for their existence. Writers select and control content and style according to purpose and audience.

d. Writing is difficult; most writing needs rewriting.

A well-equipped writing environment can include the following provisions:

1. A variety of colored pens (and types)
2. Many pencils (in colors too)
3. Various types of papers: notebooks or index cards for journals, looseleaf paper, bound pads, lined and unlined paper, different textured paper, long and short paper, erasers
4. Typewriter (if possible)
5. Several dictionaries-for ABE classes several are useful: Scholastic Dictionary of American English for lower levels, and American Heritage or Webster's New World for middle to higher levels
6. Handbooks-teacher-made handbooks are best but also The Golden Book of English or other more simplified ones
7. Ditto stencils for copying papers
8. Carbon paper for students to make copies of their own work as they write
9. Rulers
10. Scotch tape (for cutting and pasting)
11. Scissors (for cutting and pasting)
12. Thesauruses
13. Written lessons and/or style sheets on each aspect of mechanics
14. Essays, stories, newspapers and magazine articles to read and write about
15. A Writing Box containing ideas for writing to be used independently by students or as assigned for groups
16. Index cards for vocabulary development and other work
17. Folders for keeping students' papers organized (possibly 2 or 3 for each student; 1 for free writings, another for draft writings or organized according to form, e.g., letters, essays, etc.)
18. An Adult Learner's Guide to Recommended Readings (a teacher-made bibliography of high interest but low readability level readings).
19. Tracing paper (for handwriting improvement)

II. THE COMPOSING PROCESS

> The composition course should be the place where the writer not only writes but experiences in a conscious, orderly way the stages of the composing process itself.
>
> Mina Shaughnessy
> Errors and Expectations

The process of composing is not linear. It can be viewed as stages one goes through continuously, and sometimes simultaneously. A writer often returns to a prior stage while in another, or after another.

These stages include: *PREWRITING, WRITING, AND REVISING*. Each stage in the process needs to be learned and practiced. Each has its own dynamics and its own energy. Recent studies highlight the complexity of the processes of each stage. Overall, student writers need to be clearly directed, enthusiastically encouraged, and gently pushed to take full advantage of each phase.

Not every writing task will require all of the stages. In general, however, each stage needs to be given equal attention; each is as important as the other; each is as difficult as the other; each is itself a learning stage, but all are important in contributing to workable written products.

Once a particular writing task is requested, writers need to explore their range of interest and knowledge regarding a topic. The motivation, interest, thought, and discussion all encompass prewriting. Often student writers feel they have "nothing to say." This phase is concerned with helping them realize they have much to say.

After something has been written, whether it is free, controlled, or more structured, response is essential to ensuring improvement. This response may be on the part of the students themselves and/or the teacher. After responses are given--they may be in writing or oral--students then write again. A final stage of proofreading and editing follows to lead to the finished product. The amount of time spent in any one phase is dependent upon available time, student numbers, student levels, and particular assignments.

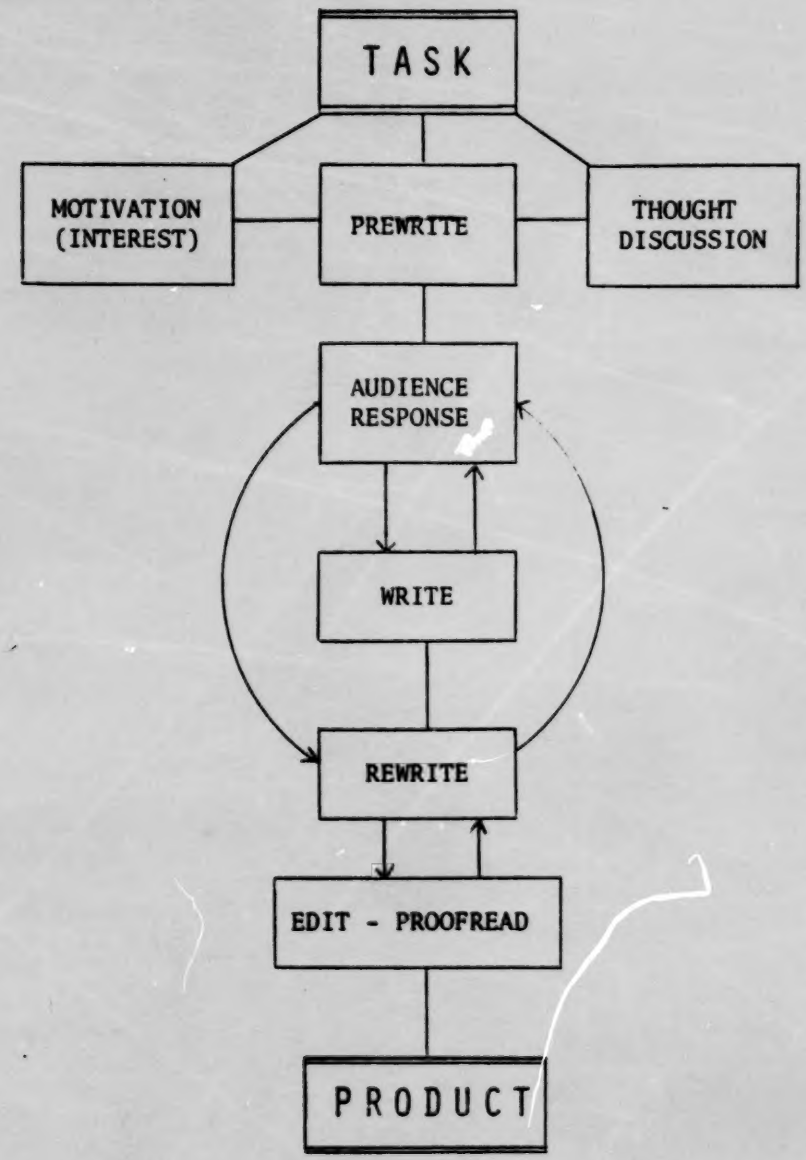
By way of illustration, a letter needs to be written.

PREWRITE:	Elicit from the students a specific need to write a letter; i.e., a precise purpose, a particular audience, and a type (personal, or business). Make notes on what is to go into it.
RESPOND:	Small or larger group discussion can inform students about letter writing conventions.
WRITE:	Letters are written individually.
RESPOND:	Students exchange letters and read and discuss.
REVISE:	Students rewrite their own letters or their partners.
PROOF and EDIT:	Students "correct" their own.

The final letter is then mailed.

A diagram of the composing process follows. It is an ideal representation which can and should be adjusted where needed. There is no point of no return.

THE COMPOSING PROCESS



A. THE PREWRITING STAGE

Prewriting is the stage during which we respond to a stimulus, generate ideas, and choose a form in which to write. It is an amorphous phase which precedes writing but which may also recur during the writing stage and even affect it. It is the period we experience before we actually write, and during revision when we need to generate more ideas. It is also the stage of discovering what we think and feel about something; the stage of gathering ideas for writing, and the stage of finding a purpose for writing. Ideas are brought to the surface. It is also known as motivation.

This preliminary stage to writing is very important and too often neglected. The amount of time it takes depends upon the group and task. A significant result of this stage is that students do begin to recognize they have much to write about. Teachers provide stimuli to get the students to generate their reactions by using their senses. If the feelings of students are tapped, a foundation for communication is established. Opportunities or food for thought are provided to make connections between daily life experiences and writing more real.

The following activities suggest some ways students can be stimulated to generate words, lists, sentences, notes, and free writing.

PREWRITING ACTIVITIES

Words

1. Ask students to write all the words they can think of in five minutes all over a paper. After, they should group them to form an abstract poem or a long sentence. Assign partners. Each person can borrow words from another to write another poem or sentence.

2. Put a word on the blackboard. Ask for ideas about it and where to put it. After several ideas are listed somewhere on the blackboard, direct the group to connect similar or related ideas. Organize the ideas into an illustrated map connecting the ideas. Students then do one of their own.

3. Print names of students vertically down the left side of the blackboard. Using each vertical letter, elicit descriptive words written horizontally.

4. Ask students to study headlines in the newspaper. Have them write their own.

Lists

1. Ask students to:
   a. Make a list of 10 or more items they wish they owned.
   b. Categorize and order them in terms of importance.
   c. List reasons why one is most important or least important.
   d. Exchange with another student. Discuss.

2. Ask students for their favorite color. Tabulate a list. Elicit discussion about how colors can represent moods, feelings, symbolism, etc. Give them an excerpt to read about it. Ask them to pick one color and to list reasons why it is a favorite. Or put the names of colors on the blackboard and ask them to write every thought they have about it. Or use actual swatches of fabric to elicit discussion.

3. Ask students to list all the reasons a particular number means something to them. Compare. Discuss whether the reasons chosen were intended to inform readers or to persuade them.

4. Guide students to make two lists comparing how people can resemble pet animals or other things.

5. Ask students to imagine they are confined to a small room for 24 hours. Have them list all of the words and feelings they might have.

6. Tell students to imagine they have just been born. List the feelings they have.

7. Give students different kinds of lists. Ask them to discuss what kind of person may have written the list, for what purpose, and for what audience.

8. Ask students to generate lists they need for a particular purpose, e.g., shopping, reminders, things to do, etc. Then guide them to categorize them.

9. Ask for a list of questions students want answered. Distribute 2 or 3 questions to each group of 3 or 4 members. Ask them to answer them.

10. Guide students to look at a painting, object, or picture. They are to list every word that comes to mind, then order the words, and then write sentences.

11. Direct students to close their eyes and listen for five minutes. Then have them list all the sounds they hear.

12. Blindfold students. Pass around something to taste. Remove blindfolds. Have them list words discussing the taste.

13. Direct students to list 10 words that have positive or negative connotations. Discuss. Ask them to generate their own positive and negative word lists.

14. Guide students to write a list of instructions for an activity which someone else has to do. Have another person do it.

15. Guide students to list ingredients for a favorite recipe. Have them write the recipe afterward.

16. Bring in a poem like "13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" by Wallace Stevens. Ask students to pick a subject they want to describe. Direct them to list 13 ways of looking at it. They may use words, phrases, or sentences. Ask them to share with a partner and to add any additional points of view.

Sentences

1. Ask students to write one, two, or three sentence reactions to questions, e.g., what was the worst or best year of your life? Ask them to define themselves in 1, 2, or 3 sentences.

2. Divide the class into 3 or 4 member groups. Have them write a cooperative story. One begins and each student adds another sentence.

3. Bring in some advertisements. Discuss in terms of sentence length, word choice, and persuasive appeal. Establish criteria with students regarding effectiveness of ads. Have students generate ideas for original products and ads. Ask them to invent a new product which they will write an ad for.

4. Bring in samples of postcard greetings. Discuss and analyze in terms of audience and purpose. Ask students to imagine themselves in a foreign place. Have them send a card to someone.

5. Offer sentence completion statements, e.g., if I could be something else, I would be a _____ so I could be _____.

6. Direct students to write the longest or shortest sentence they can think of, the most beautiful or ugliest.

7. Put a thoughtful quotation on the blackboard or distribute copies of it. Generate discussion about its meaning. Ask students to alternate bringing in a Thought For The Day for the group to discuss, one they find or write themselves.

8. Distribute a figurative phrase or statement to a small group. Ask them to discuss its meaning and to rewrite the statement literally.

Note Taking

1. Do a pantomime or improvisation in class with students or yourself. Ask all students to take notes describing what they are seeing. Arrange small groups. Ask them to compare notes and then to write a group paragraph incorporating each other's notes.

2. Have students interview each other for a purpose. They take notes and then write a paragraph summary. (Useful for a first class session.)

3. Ask students to observe a window display or other visual stimulus. They take notes and write a descriptive paragraph later.

4. Ask students to contribute ideas for reports they would like to write. They list ideas. Then they choose topics and generate preliminary notes.

Free Writing

1. Ask students to put words on the blackboard as they arrive. Have them choose one word to write about for 10-15 minutes, letting them fill up a paper with as many thoughts as they have in response to the one word they choose. (The same kind of free writing can be done using complete statements.) Have each student read his or her paper out loud and guide class response to the flow of the writing.

2. Stream of Consciousness: Ask students to write for 10 minutes about everything that comes to their minds. Discuss.

3. Play some instrumental music. Ask students to write everything that comes to mind.

4. Guide students in small groups to brainstorm ideas for a topic for a set time.

B. THE WRITING STAGE

The writing stage of the composing process involves the synthesis and application of basic skills. Ideas, facts, and thoughts are organized into a form. These forms may be letters, essays, reports, etc., each having its own purpose; to inform, to persuade, to narrate, to describe, to explain, to define and to analyze. Specifically, a letter (a form), may have a particular purpose (to inform) or an audience to whom it is addressed. The content and form of writing are interrelated. Sometimes a student is given the form and asked to generate the content or vice versa.

Regardless of which forms are practiced, teachers of writing need at least to:

1. Consider each writing task in terms of audience and purpose.
2. Offer writing tasks in a sequence of prewriting, writing, revising.
3. Include many different kinds of applied writing tasks (different forms).
4. Have students write some papers which will not be corrected or marked (e.g., free writing and journals).
5. Provide lots of opportunities for silent and oral reading and for analysis of how writing is put together.
6. Require students to generate form from content and vice versa.
7. Provide many opportunities for note taking.
8. Provide many opportunities for individual and group writing.

ABE writers need to develop an awareness of writing forms, as well as to practice them. This is a useful technique for focusing on form:

1. Distribute copies of each of the following: a letter to the editor, a myth, a news article, and a child's poem to small groups of four.
2. Ask students to read each form and to discuss the following questions:
   a. What is the author's purpose?
   b. Who is it intended for? How do you know?
   c. Why is the writing organized the way it is?
   d. How does the language fit the audience?
3. Direct students to choose one form to write in; each member should choose a different form from the four read.
4. When the four forms are written, each group reconvenes and analyzes each of their original writings with the same questions.

A variation on this could include using four versions of only one form to study one form in greater depth, e.g., four letters, stories, memos, etc.

Forms of Writing

Applied writing tasks should include at least some practice in journal writing, dialogues, essays, letters, resumes, and reports.

JOURNALS

Journals are personal records or books of original entries. In a personal way, the students practice journalism; they gather and write their own thoughts in response to their own needs or by responding to suggested topics. Some

points about journals:

1. Students become their own audience; they can work out problems by thinking through the problem on paper.
2. Journals can be used as a break in class dynamics or can be written in at home.
3. Journals can be used as a way of reflecting on life experience.
4. They provide a means toward developing writing as a habit.
5. They free writing anxiety by giving the student writing experience and more practice.
6. Specific entries can be used for further writing development.

Journal writing should be enjoyable, and free. Journals may or may not be read by teachers.

It is recommended that the journal entries be kept separately in a separate book, a section of a book, or even on 5 x 8 index cards if a book is too formidable. Students can also be encouraged to illustrate their journals, perhaps even give titles to an entry if appropriate. Illustrations or titles help in teaching a student focus. A sheet entitled "Points About Keeping Your Journal" could be distributed to outline specific points that ought to be emphasized. If journals are to be responses to suggested topics, then also distribute a sheet of "Suggested Journal Topics" or a "Suggested List of Questions" to be answered.

Examples of how journals can be generated include:

1. For 15 minutes, write in your journal. Either record the events that happened on your way here, or what you predict may happen later, or simply write down what you are now thinking about.

2. At home, write from 3 to 5 sentences of from 5 to 15 words each, recording your day or your thoughts.

3. Using the list of suggested topics, write your journal entry.

4. Read a news article and respond to it in your journal.

5. Using the question sheet of question topics, respond to the question in your journal. (A question a day or every other day could be used, or ask students to generate their own questions for each entry which they will answer.)

DIALOGUES

Dialogues are written conversations. Writing dialogue gives students a chance to practice informal language, levels of word and sentence meaning, audience adaptation, and use of detail.

Dialogues can be written in response to a particular situation, setting, or characters or a problem which needs a solution, e.g., you are on a diet and having a conversation with yourself about whether you should eat something you shouldn't. Use yourself as the "me" and "myself" and then have the "I" enter.

Some examples follow:

1. You see two people sitting on a subway. Take notes on your observations. Write their conversation.
2. You just received a failing grade and you don't deserve it. Write the conversation between your teacher and you.
3. You see someone you are interested in meeting. Write the conversation.
4. You are standing at a bus stop and someone pickpockets you. The person does not leave. You approach the individual and confront him or her. Write the conversation. (See James Moffet's Student Centered Language Arts for more examples.)

ESSAYS

Essays generally defined as compositions which present a point of view on a particular subject, are often very difficult for ABE writers because the skills needed to produce a coherently organized paper are complex. Although some students may have the ability to use some of the generic skills involved in essay writing, most will probably have difficulty making connections between ideas or details and the whole concept they want to develop. It is helpful if they are introduced to the four types of essay writing (narration, description, exposition, and persuasion), as outgrowths of what they personally already know, but now have to apply differently. For example, elicit from their daily lives when they have to narrate, describe, explain, or persuade. Use these examples for essay assignments.

For essay writing, students particularly need to practice:

1. Seeing themselves in the role of the narrator, describer, explainer and persuader
2. Making connections between details and major ideas
3. Developing a sense of methods of development
4. Writing for different purposes
5. Using denotation and connotation (levels of meaning)
6. Organizing according to a format (introduction, body and conclusion)

The order for teaching the types of essay writing can vary, but since people tend to write more easily about themselves or what is close to them, it is best to begin with narration or description. Of course, the categories of essay writing are not exclusive of each other. Description can include narration, and vice versa. Students need to be directed toward understanding that the four major types can appear in one essay. An explanation of each of the types follows.

Description - involves expressing an impression of something, someone, or somewhere; composing a word picture characterized by vivid and precise language.

Some stimuli for descriptive writing are:

1. Write in response to a picture. Describe what you see and what you might not see. Use pictures that mean something to you. Write this for someone in your family.
2. Using an object that has special meaning to you, describe it. Write this description for a relative you have not seen in a long time.
3. Describe something without naming it. Ask a partner in the class to name it. Write it for that person.
4. Describe someone in the room from non-verbal clues. (Define non-verbal.) Write it for that person.

Narration - involves relating events that have happened; telling a story.

Narrative writing demands work on the sequence of events (chronological ordering, importance, or emphatic ordering), point of view, fact versus opinion, tone, verb tenses, parallel construction, and punctuation).

Some stimuli for narrative writing include:

1. Narrate your autobiography (using a time line, chart significant events and choose one to write about). Tell it to a relative.
2. Using models of legends, fables, or other short stories, write one of your own. Write it for a child.
3. Narrate some events that happened to you on a trip. Write it for a friend.

Exposition - involves writing that explains or gives information. Three major types include analysis (taking apart a whole), process (detailing how something happens), and definition (giving meaning to a concept).

For expository writing focus on generating topic sentences, developing relationships between main ideas and details, separating titles from topic sentences, various methods of development (facts, examples, comparison/contrast, cause and effect) and sentence combining:

Some stimuli for expository writing include:

1. Analyze a story for its elements. Write it for a publication, or as a critic.
2. Explain the steps you follow to perform a particular activity. Write it for a class member.
3. Define a concept for a 7-year-old child (e.g., responsibility, pain).

Persuasion or Argumentation - involves the process of arriving at reasons and conclusions to convince or persuade a reader to agree with the writer.

Persuasive writing incorporates emphasizing relationships between main ideas and details for support, as well as carefully structured methods of

development. An emphasis on qualifying statements is also needed to avoid generalizations without foundation.

Some stimuli for persuasive writing include:

1. Convince a child to do something.
2. Persuade the class that your views on abortion, wars, marriage, or other controversial subjects are the best.
3. Convince a family member to take on a new responsibility.

LETTERS

Letters written for particular purposes (e.g., to invite, to complain, to request information, to order, to apply) are excellent applied tasks for all students. They are practical and allow for brief writings to develop skills. Even essays can be written in letter form.

Letter writing clearly lends itself to focusing on an audience, use of informal and formal language; use of conventions of punctuation, capitalization, indentation, and format; and use of detail.

It is best to generate specific letter writing needs from students and to categorize them in terms of life skills areas; e.g., community, occupational, social, and personal. It is also useful to introduce both formal and informal letter writing.

Ask students what circumstances in their life as consumers, workers, student and community members would present the need to write a letter. Then have them write them.

1. Choose a community problem that affects you. Write a letter to the editor of the local paper.
2. Using want ads, choose a job that appeals to you. Write a letter of application.
3. You are having a special party. Write a letter inviting someone.
4. Your child is having trouble in school. Write a letter to the teacher.

RESUMES

Resumes are outline summaries of one's experience, education and personal data to be used for obtaining a job. A growing number of positions demand resumes before a person can be considered as an applicant. In addition, resumes are useful for practicing a number of specific skills areas including use of detail, punctuation, categorization, outlining, ordering information, and organization.

Resumes are best practiced in stages. Direct students to generate details, order and organize the details, arrange them on a page, and write sub-sections for each category. Form and content are particularly important.

Some stimuli for resume writing include:

1. Give specific details of a fictional person. Ask students to categorize the information and put it into resume form. This can be done individually or in groups and should then be compared.
2. Give samples of resumes, discuss elements, then have students write their own responses to questions in a questionnaire which is designed to elicit the kind of information needed for a resume, e.g., Where have you worked; Do you have any particular skills, interests?
3. Have students interview each other and write each other's resumes.
4. Have students do two resumes for two different audiences (two different jobs).

The pivotal question for resume writing should be: WHO AM I,
WHERE HAVE I BEEN, and
WHAT HAVE I DONE.

REPORTS

Reports involve taking information, categorizing it, and producing a written summary of information to provide a perspective on a topic.

Reports can be done individually and in groups. Report writing involves note taking skills, essay skills, and attention to detail. Format is also very important. Provide opportunities for students to practice the various stages necessary in producing the report.

Stimuli for report writing should include the students' needs and interests. Ask them what they would like to find out about.

POETRY

Poetry offers a personally fulfilling writing experience, a stimulus for other writing, and an opportunity to write with freedom from rules and other writing restrictions. Particularly useful are free verse, Haiku, and other forms of short poetry that allow for students to understand use of precise and figurative language, form, and focus. Use models first as examples.

A series of suggested writing activities incorporating practice in all of the writing forms follows:

WRITING ACTIVITIES

1. Ask students to choose a neighborhood problem they are concerned with. They are to research it, take notes, and then to do one of the following:

   a. Write a report on it for a newly appointed class council;
   b. Write a persuasive essay convincing the council to do something about it.

2. Using excerpts from the Guinness Book of World Records or other fact books, ask students to choose a fact they consider important. Direct them to write an expository essay explaining the fact to a 10 year old child. Then ask them to rewrite it for an older person.

3. Guide students to listen to a piece of their favorite music at home. Ask them to write four different sentences or paragraphs based on the following outline:

   a. Narrate a story that could take place with music as background
   b. Describe how they feel while listening to it
   c. Explain what is happening in the music; explain its parts
   d. Persuade the class that it is the best music

4. Ask students to write a persuasive essay convincing a partner that a particular dessert is best, e.g., ice cream. Call it Food, Glorious Food.

5. What's in a Name. Ask students to write a report on the history of their own names or the history of names of countries or states in America. Either supply the historical information for them or direct them to find it.

6. Using a television show, movie, radio show, or live play, guide students to write a critical essay. Guide students toward developing criteria for determining what to look for and what to write about.

7. Either elicit situations from students in which they need to write letters, or give them situations. Distinguish the situations according to personal, social, and business. Have the students write one letter for each type. Highlight the need to adjust language to purpose and audience. Use life needs for specific applications.

8. Using classified advertisements, guide students to prepare resumes.

9. Ask students to write a process essay involving the necessary procedures for opening a checking account, buying something, or another appropriate life task.

10. Guide students to write expository or persuasive essays about health problems, buying practices, civil rights, equal employment, or other relevant topics.

11. Ask students to describe how they feel sitting in the waiting room of a particular office, e.g., dentist's, doctor's, welfare, etc.

12. Using models, ask students to write any of the following: proverbs, epitaphs, fables, cartoons, or short stories.

13. Ask students to write group poems.

14. Ask students to write original wedding vows, or other kinds of vows.

15. Using models of obituaries from a newspaper, ask students to write their own.

16. Ask students to write announcements heralding an important event, e.g., births, special occasions, or whatever they consider important.

17. Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4. Ask them to write a soap opera.

18. Give students a recipe to follow to write a "grammar poem." Use 1 noun, 3 adjectives, 3 adverbs, 1 phrase, etc.

19. Ask students to write down a problem they have. Divide them into couples. They should discuss each other's problems and take notes on their responses. Then they should write an advice response.

20. Ask students to choose a person they totally disagree with. Direct them to research that person's life. Guide them to then write a speech which they will deliver to a particular audience as that person. The class will act as the prescribed audience, e.g., a group of Nazi's during 1940. After the speech is delivered, students attempt to guess who the person is.

21. Ask students to compare and/or contrast the best or worst time in their lives.

22. A Writing Project. Initiate a display writing project, e.g., P. S. 6 Propaganda. Students will choose specific words to advertise what is so special about the school they attend or some other subject worthy of propaganda (e.g., super, excellent, ingenious school. I love it.). Then the students can illustrate them and post them for display.

23. Ask students to write short illustrated reports on visits to local sites.

24. Direct students to write Profiles. Using carefully chosen words, ask students to write profiles of people they are close to. Direct them to fill out the following: NAME (insert the person's name), FACE (insert a descriptive word), HAIR (insert another descriptive word), BRAIN (insert a descriptive word), BODY (another descriptor), IN GENERAL (insert a significant statement, e.g., Name-Gail; Face-Smooth; Hair-Fluffy; Brain-Forgetful; Body-Soft; In general-I love her).

25. Ask students to choose a famous person they admire. Direct them to research the person's life. Guide them to write a report or a definition essay on the meaning of fame. They could also be asked to write reactions to "If You Were Famous, What Would You Be Famous For And Why?"

26. Prepare a poem for rewriting by students. Use one by students if available. Ask them to rewrite it in prose. Discuss how it changes in meaning or effect.

27. Distribute very short stories to small groups of 3 or 4, one story to each group. Ask each member to choose a character from the story and change something about the story - the setting, the time, the events, or other elements. They are to write a new version incorporating the change(s). Or, ask the students to imagine they are one of the characters. Then they can write a narrative as though they were the character speaking.

28. Using a student essay, analyze for content and style to teach outlining. Ask students, in small groups, to write an outline from a sample essay. Discuss why or why not an outline can be devised.

29. Ask students to write a letter to someone they have not seen in a long time whom they wish they could see.

30. Guide students to write an expository essay on "Things I Am Thankful For." Elicit lists first, then assign the essay.

31. Ask students to choose an idiomatic expression they hear friends use or they use. Guide them to write a paragraph explaining it.

32. Distribute pictures to individual students. Ask them to write a descriptive essay describing what they think is going on in the picture.

33. Distribute written controlled or guided compositions to each student. Ask them to change the verb tense, or other elements and rewrite. (See 10 Steps or 26 Steps.)

34. Show students samples of menus from restaurants. Guide them, in small groups, to create a menu for an imaginary restaurant. Focus on specific word choice and descriptions.

35. Using samples of telegrams, guide students to choose an event or incident they wish would happen. Ask them to write a telegram to someone announcing the event or news.

36. Ask students to describe how they felt when they experienced a new thing or event for the first time, e.g., the first time they saw snow.

37. Guide students to write about an event that changed their lives. Write it in the form of a letter or essay.

38. Have students, in small groups, write open ended stories. Each student can present his or her story to the group for them to write endings for it, or have them do the same with story beginnings.

39. Set up debate teams. Introduce the techniques of debating and direct students to research information for debates on topics of their choice.

40. Ask students to choose one of their favorite legends, myths, or fairy tales. They are to modernize it, either in small groups or individually. Direct each to write an updated version. If they have none of their own, give them one.

41. Guide students to write VIP's Projects. They are to choose from 3 to 5 people they consider very important persons. They write a paragraph explaining why each is a VIP.

42. Guide students to observe someone in a supermarket. They are to take notes on the following or other criteria: how the person is dressed; what items he or she is buying, etc. Then they write an analytical essay interpreting what kind of person they think he or she is.

43. Direct students to choose a news story from two different newspapers. They are to analyze each for the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE and WHY and then to write a brief comparative analysis of the way the two different newspapers treat the same story.

44. Using one line sentence starters, ask students to write paragraphs.

45. Dictate a paragraph to students. Ask them to write the paragraph as you dictate. Let them put in the appropriate capitalization, punctuation, etc. Then distribute a corrected version. Have each student correct their own or another student's before comparing the corrected version to their own. Then have the students, working in pairs, write a paragraph of their own which they will dictate to their partner to copy down. The same procedure can then be followed for checking and revising their own paragraphs.

46. Assign readings. Ask students to write about the readings. These can be in the form of story reactions or in the form of questions and answers. Students can make up their own questions on a reading for another student to answer.

47. Facilitate improvisations or play readings. Ask students to write about what they are watching.

48. Ask students to make up funny laws. Ask them to write a paragraph explaining why the law should be upheld.

49. Ask students to write a letter to one or both of their parents, imagining they have just entered the world or are about to leave it.

50. Using any appropriate prewriting activities (see prewriting section), extend the activity into a writing.

C. THE REVISING STAGE

During the revising stage, students develop the sense of writing as material for rewriting and not as an immediate, final product. Here, by working together or individually in a comfortable, warm working atmosphere, students have the chance to learn from each other and to practice the tasks of revision. These tasks include: rewriting, resulting from rethinking what has been written; proofreading for specific elements; and finally, editing - making the actual changes.

Like a painting, a piece of writing needs to be viewed from a distance to appreciate the whole. After students write, some time should elapse before they rewrite. Then, it will be easier to see what changes need to be made.

To rewrite effectively, students need to be put in the shoes of a reader; they need to read, as much as possible, their own work and others. They need to learn to read a piece of writing several times for the purpose of revising some elements, and then, again, to read for more precise corrections.

For many ABE students, the rewriting stage may be as basic as copying corrected material or rewriting changed material for only one or two elements, e.g., they may have to change present tense forms to past.

Proofreading, which follows rewriting or may be part of it, is the rereading of written products for three specific kinds of writing improvement: mechanical errors (what they are and why they might be there); stylistic flaws (whether the language is appropriate in terms of audience and purpose); and coherence, unity, and organization (whether the point of the paper has been achieved and what the relationship between one idea and its details has to another).

Proofreading is an essential step in making writing better. Students need to learn that, like all writers, they should expect that some changes will have to be made; that different kinds of readings are necessary to pay appropriate attention to each area of concern, and that several readings may be necessary before something is submitted as "final."

The entire revising stage can be an additional learning activity for students and contribute to their greater understanding of the writing process and experience. Students often feel, "Well, I wrote it, now do I have to read it too?" Instead they can be directed toward understanding that they can have every reason to be proud of what they communicated because it will be read by themselves, the students, and the teacher, and made even better. They see that people are interested in their thoughts and that they have something to say.

The following activities suggest some ways to provide for practice in revising writing.

Revising Activities

1. Distribute rulers and ask students to use them as they read. As they read down a page the ruler placed under a line of print helps them focus more precisely on that line.

2. Ask students to write on every other line when using lined paper, or to double-space their work if it is on unlined paper. The space will allow for more careful reading and provide room for corrections and changes.

3. Make up guideline sheets with appropriate questions to guide them through questioning to find out whether the writing is working. Assign pairs or groups to read each other's work. Identify them as readers. If several people read one paper, use a chart. (See appendix.)

4. Teach them to read backwards on a line of print as editors in publishing houses often do to find spelling and punctuation errors. They read from left to right in each word but move from right to left along the line. They can more easily see each word for what it actually is.

5. Have the students read their papers out loud. Many errors are easily corrected when they say what they thought they wrote and see that it is not exactly as they thought.

6. Distribute samples of edited materials as models. Use professional writers' works if possible to emphasize that all writers rewrite. The library is a good source for drafts of professional writers' works.

7. Make up a chart with sentences consisting of a few editing symbols. Use the conventional ones or devise some from the class, e.g., the caret (^), paragraph symbol (¶), and others. Distribute them to students and discuss. Direct students to use the marks when editing.

8. Dictate a paragraph. Distribute a corrected version. Students compare it to their own.

III. DEVELOPING TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

A. MECHANICS

Mechanics and conventions of written standard English should be taught within the context of sentences and paragraphs, preferably students' own writing. Students need to be guided toward recognizing that there are reasons for using conventions, that they help make thoughts clear. To learn to write correctly students must acquire some of the language used to convey mechanics and rules. They also need to see that words and thoughts have specific functions when written.

Mina Shaughnessy in her book Errors and Expectations clearly delineates the errors inexperienced student writers make. She also refers to these students as "basic writers." ABE students function on an even more basic level than such basic writers in freshman college classes, although the kinds of errors both groups make are similar. Their writing reveals the following characteristics:

1. Incomplete or awkward sentences
2. Inadequate verb forms
3. A lack of word knowledge and incorrect word choice
4. Inaccurate internal and terminal punctuation
5. Spelling problems
6. Handwriting difficulties
7. Undeveloped and poorly focused ideas

Most ABE students have difficulties with all of the above areas to some degree, lower level students even more than middle or upper levels.

Additional problems frequently found among ABE groups (and ESL groups) include speech differences which affect written language. This is commonly referred to as dialect interference. These include the following:

1. Loss of ed endings in past tense verbs
2. s endings in 3rd person singular present tense verb forms and in plural nouns
3. The use of to be verb forms
4. Double negatives
5. Use of "it" for "there" as a filler word

It is recommended that all of the above mechanical writing needs, therefore, be treated in the writing class. It is always necessary to remember, however, that the goal is not to help students become better detectives of errors in isolation, but instead to help them teach themselves to become better writers. They need to learn some "rules" but need to know that, just as in life, in composition there are no absolutes. For every "rule" set down, a time comes when it can be broken for emphasis or another reason.

The following questions and responses reflect some of the concerns faced by ABE teachers:

1. What is mechanics?

   Mechanics, defined differently in different handbooks, usually refers to spelling, handwriting, punctuation, and grammar conventions or rules in standard English.

2. What is grammar?

   Grammar is the study of how language behaves; the use of appropriate forms and structures.

3. What is correctness?

   Correctness can be defined several ways, two of which include:
   a. whatever conforms to standard American-English usage;
   b. whatever works is correct.

   In many situations, correctness can be determined by preference as well as conventions. Other situations--academic and business writing--demand adherence to standard forms.

4. Should mechanics be taught?

   Current research finds only a low correlation between teaching isolated grammar or mechanical exercises and improved writing ability. Instead, it is generally recommended that most mechanical concerns be treated within the context of writing tasks. In other words, you can focus on particular skill needs students have but do so as problems come up and when students are working on whole structures. Use exercises judiciously and use students own sentences and paragraphs to focus on correctness when appropriate.

5. Is there a preferred sequence for teachning mechanics?

   Once students have been diagnosed and priorities of skill needs assessed, teach those areas that are most pressing. Treat the group needs in class, and the individual needs as appropriate. Most of all, though, teach sentence sense first. While working on the sentences for lower levels and more complex for middle and upper levels, incorporate the related skill needs as appropriate.

6. How can I teach sentence structure?

   Teaching sentence structure is an exceedingly slow process because each aspect must be thoroughly incorporated into the students' own writing, not only mastered in exercises. The following sequence is appropriate for all levels; however, a beginning group might take a year to master the single sentence, while an advanced group might master the sequence in a year. At all levels, review regularly but leave time for assimilation.

   a. A sentence is rarely a "complete thought." Define a sentence by eliciting from your group of students what they already know

about sentences. This needs to be brought to the surface. Ask them: What ingredients do you need to write a sentence. Guide them toward a functional description of a sentence: groups of words which make sense, a capital letter at the beginning, a final punctuation mark, e.g., . or ? or ! ; and a subject and main verb.

b. Teach that a sentence has a main part (call it main clause or a trunk); this is the subject and verb part. Teach the simple sentence first and its corresponding simple patterns; then review fragments and run-ons. (See Robert Allen's Working Sentences for further development and examples.)

c. Give them practice in finding the subject (the who or what word); include singular and plural nouns and simple and compound subjects. While teaching this it is convenient to review use of possessives, commas in a series, and subject-verb agreement. It is also appropriate to teach common verb forms and irregular verbs.

d. When you are ready for the compound sentence, offer it in the following way:

two trunks = compound sentence

Give students the opportunity to identify the number of trunks and ways to connect them. It is appropriate here to stress coordinating conjunctions (but, and, or, nor, for, so), particular internal punctuation marks, i.e., semi-colons, commas with conjunctions, and capitalization.

e. When teaching complex sentences, focus on teaching

1. a trunk with something which is not a trunk (teach the comma following introductory clauses)
2. introduce clauses that begin with:

   because, when, since, although, even though, who, that, which (review fragments here)

3. Introduce position of clauses before, after, and between trunks (review commas here, subjective and objective pronouns).
4. Use sentence development techniques such as:

   a. sentence generating - eliciting sentences from students using select words;
   b. sentence expansion - adding words to existing sentences;
   c. sentence combining - adding two or more sentences in different ways (using coordination and subordination).

5. Teach students how to correct for their own mechanical errors; correct only for what has been covered, making the student increasingly responsible for more corrections.

7. How can I teach verb forms?

   Teach them within the context of sentences using substitution or Cloze techniques, and controlled writing. Also use word form charts which delineate functions of words.

8. How can I treat lack of word knowledge and incorrect word choice?

   a. Teach students to use resources for vocabulary development, e.g., thesauruses, dictionaries, and others.
   b. Play word games.
   c. Teach them to classify words according to functions and families and to develop word form charts (see appendix).
   d. Do "word" prewriting activities (see prewriting activities).
   e. Encourage reading.
   f. Use word-a-day charts (see appendix).

9. How can I help students with punctuation? Define punctuation as the written signals needed to read writing. Use sentences and paragraphs to teach punctuation.

   a. Give students paragraphs to punctuate and then compare with a corrected version.
   b. Read a passage aloud while they look at an unpunctuated version and punctuate it as it is read.
   c. Give funny statements that could be ambiguous without punctuation.
   d. Teach rules as they come up, e.g., the commas with a conjunction when you teach compound sentences.

10. How do I deal with spelling?

    Introduce spelling as having a specific purpose, i.e., to make writing more readable and to be used as it is needed.

    The ability to spell depends on many skills: hand-eye coordination, reproducing words from copying, pronunciation, discriminating letter forms and reading from left to right, the ability to discriminate sound, auditory memory, and recall.

    Spelling texts and lists survive, but current studies stress teaching students how to deal with words they know and want to learn. If lists are to be used, organize them according to basic word lists, life skills, e.g., personal, social, consumer, occupational, and educational, word families, or word functions (nouns, verbs, etc.)

    Focus on the following kinds of spelling problems: spelling the wrong word, transposing letters, omitting letters, substituting letters, adding letters, doubling or not, poor handwriting, carelessness, sound confusion, and inaccurate pronunciation.

Take spelling words from the daily and periodic writing of students and, most importantly, offer a method for learning new words:

a. Rewrite those words several times
b. Pronounce them
c. Spell them from memory
d. Write them once again from memory

The following sequence is also useful:

SPELLING HELP

Help the students to observe themselves as spellers:

What kinds of mistakes do they make?
What patterns are there?
Do they always forget to double final consonants?
Are they writing as they are speaking?
Are they confusing t with d or other similar sounds?

Have them collect misspelled words and put them on a chart as Mina Shaughnessy suggests:

Word	Misspelling	Letters or syllables involved
Type of Misspelling		Review the types of misspellings

Review appropriate spelling terminology with students, such as the following:

accent	consonant cluster	prefix	syllable
compound	diacritic e	schwa	vowel
consonant	homophone	suffix	

Based on individual problems, assign specific tasks for practice. Guide them to develop their own lists from their own writings throughout their attendance in class. Guide them to develop more specific pronunciation. Work on spelling development in small doses, more toward getting students to check their own spelling problems as a habit. Teach the use of the dictionary. Review rules as they come up.

11. What about handwriting difficulties?

Often students don't write because they are embarrassed by how it looks. Attention and sensitivity to language is facilitated by focusing on handwriting. Many lower level ABE students have particular needs in this area.

To motivate interest in handwriting development, do a brief handwriting analysis activity. The criteria for analysis can be gotten from an appropriate resource book. Students can team up and, as a group activity, analyze each other's script. Then offer the following exercises:

a. left to right exercises;
   1. draw lines
   2. make circles, squares, rectangles, and other shapes;
   3. write from left to right;
b. write on the blackboard;
c. trace letters and words in the air, using sandpaper letters and tracing paper;
d. make shapes to music or a beat (clear handwriting is achieved with a rhythm and a specific number of strokes per letter);
e. copy writing (even play at calligraphy); Have a student dictate a paragraph to someone else who writes in light pencil. Have student trace over it with a finger and then pen.
f. leave extra space between letters, words, and sentences.

The smoother and quicker students can write, the less anxious they feel about the physical demands of writing. They need help toward making their handwriting more legible and toward eliminating errors that occur from carelessness.

12. How can I treat dialect interference? (Also see p. 47.)

a. Use contrastive analysis - give two versions (dialect and standard English) of a writing and have students analyze them;
b. Using a story or poem in dialect, ask students to rewrite it in Standard English;
c. Ask students to write sentences as they say them and then rewrite;
d. Ask students to write a paragraph as it is dictated and then compare it with a corrected version;
e. Use dialogue writing as an accurate account of speech.

13. How can I help lower level (0-3) students?

a. If students cannot write at all, or very little, begin with a language experience story. (See Using Language Experience with Adults in Bibliography.)
b. Guide them to copy writing first. (Use 10 Steps or a similar controlled writing text.);
c. Review differences between upper and lower case letters, spaces between words, punctuation differences;
d. Direct them to write from dictation using phonetically similar words, other appropriate words, and simple sentences;
e. Provide opportunities for memorization and writing of basic words from basic word lists;
f. Guide them to compose brief but original sentences;
g. Dictate a short story reviewing new points as they appear, e.g., quotation marks. Have students write it continuously over a period of a few days, adding to what they wrote before so they can see a longer piece of their own writing when they are finished.
h. After they are doing some reading, they can begin to write answers to questions about their reading. Lower level ABE students need help in figuring out sounds and letters and recognizing words. They need to practice identifying sounds; identifying letters and punctuation; drawing letters and punctuation; observing spatial conventions; matching each sound with its spelling; matching punctuation to voice intonation; sounding out spelling; and writing sentences.

The introduction of a controlled vocabulary, using Cloze procedures (deleting selected letters or words from text), and eye movement exercises help to assist low levels with decoding. After they become more proficient with decoding, encoding can be stressed (an emphasis on handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and transcription skills).

14. What about undeveloped and poorly-focused ideas?

This is more of a "clear thinking" and craft problem which is greatly improved by practicing note taking, ordering ideas, and using various methods of development.

15. What about coherence and unity?

Connecting and organizing written thoughts, a complex skill, involves teaching students the generating of thoughts, grouping and ordering them, using transitions, coordinating and subordinating main ideas and details, and using diverse methods of developing and organizing of students need to focus on the processes of going from simple sequences to more complex ones, comparing and contrasting ideas and in making generalizations. Modeling is a useful technique for incorporating such skills. Use student essays as models. Guide students through the process of eliciting thoughts, ordering them, relating them, organizing them, and finally presenting them in a coherently united form.

16. How can <u>purpose</u> in writing be taught?

Purpose in writing involves identifying why a piece of writing exists, i.e., to inform, to persuade, to describe, or to explain. Relate the meaning of why people do things to students' writings. Guide them to understand that when purpose is identified, the task of writing is easier and clearer.

B. VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Student writers often lack a developed writing vocabulary. Their vocabularies are often distinguished in terms of three categories: sight, listening, and speaking. A necessary fourth category is needed. Basic education students need to develop all four vocabularies in order to have more "food" for writing--words. These categories are distinguished in the following way:

1. Sight vocabulary - words which students can recognize on sight and can read;

2. Speaking vocabulary - words which they can say but may not be able to read or write;

3. Listening vocabulary - words which they can understand but probably don't use;

4. Writing vocabulary - words which they can see, speak, listen and actually use on paper.

It is very important to assist students toward becoming more *resourceful* in the process of vocabulary acquisition, more important than teaching them a particular list of words in itself. For example, if they experienc a new word, can they repeatedly on their own:

1. Go to a dictionary for the analysis of the word;

2. Find its derivation;

3. Determine its function in sentences;

4. Write other forms of the word;

5. Use it in a sentence;

6. Use the context they find the word in to determine its meaning.

The development of writing vocabulary supplements overall vocabulary development. Teachers can and should help students acquire techniques for learning more about words.

In directing vocabulary development consider the following goals:

1. Identifying word forms - give words or generate them. Show students how to create other forms of the same word by developing word form charts. (See appendix.)

2. Discovering word meanings - use a dictionary and thesaurus to teach word knowledge expansion and denotation and connotation. Try to

help students to get at why they use the words they do and to develop new ones as well as reasons for learning new ones, e.g., a particular word can help to persuade someone, or more active verbs can make writing more interesting and less repetitious. Reasons for developing new vocabulary can be generated in a class discussion on the Power of Words, or "How Words Can Hamper or Help Communication" or "How People Can Be Hurt by Words."

Another useful technique is to use A Word A Day Method or Life Experience Glossaries. (See samples in the appendix.)

3. Making word choices:

   a. Choosing words for syntactical meaning, purpose, and audience. Discuss and define terms such as archaic, formal, informal, colloquial; slang, dialect, jargon, and cliche.

   b. Choosing general or specific words. Give lists of groups of four words each from the general to specific and then have students write their own, e.g., car, automobile, Chevrolet, Chevette; food, bread, Levy's, wheat.

   C. Choosing vivid words-active verbs. Two helpful techniques are to require students to create poems or comics or to write Haiku poems. Comics are effective because within a few frames the word and thought choices can suggest so much. Haiku poetry requires a focus on syllabication, connotative meaning, and use of statement, all woven together to create an emotional word picture.

C. EVALUATING WRITING

The evaluation of writing is central to writing improvement. The more students write, the more they need responses. While some student writing--journals and free writing--should not be evaluated, most writing needs to be read and responded to by the teacher or other students.

The following questions focus on concerns for ABE teachers:

1. What is evaluation?

   Evaluation is the appraisal or judgment of a piece of writing by a reader. Three purposes of evaluation are possible:

   a. Diagnostic--An individual, initial judgment for the purpose of prescription

   b. Formative-- Ongoing, individual judgment for progressive improvement

   c. Summative--A final, individual judgment of overall improvement

   Students can be evaluated individually or across a group, but individual evaluations are essential to writing appropriate prescriptions, and as a measure of progress.

2. How do I diagnose students' writing skill needs most efficiently.

   There are various methods of diagnostic scoring currently used. (For a detailed description of each method, see Cooper and O'Dell, Evaluating Writing.)

   Each method has its advantages and disadvantages, according to its users and individual preferences; however, the major advantage of holistic scoring which is preferred, overall, is that it treats a piece of writing as a whole, rather than focusing on isolated elements which may have little or no bearing, in themselves, on writing ability or improvement. (See the appendix for a sample of holistic scoring with a criteria scale used for diagnostic writing samples.)

   Holistic scoring is the reading and scoring of a paper on the basis of overall impression by two or more readers. The team first meets to establish a scale of criteria. Papers are then read quickly (a matter of two a piece) by two readers, each of whom assigns a score. If the scores are discrepant, a third reader evaluates the paper.

3. How can I construct useful writing sample topics for diagnostic and ongoing evaluation?

   The topics for writing samples can best be determined by a particular group of students and the goals of a program, but consider that topics for writing samples should have the following characteristics:

1. Be able to be written about without prior preparation
2. Be stimulating
3. Identify an audience
4. Specify a purpose
5. Specify length
6. Include limited choice
7. Be clear (Use simple language and directions)
8. Include two types of writing if time allows, e.g., a letter and an essay

The purpose of the initial writing sample should be to assess a student's present skill strengths and weaknesses. For initial writing samples use one sample question for all students. For progressive evaluations use a variety of choices.

Some suggested writing sample topics include the following:

For low levels: A Place I Like to Be (Describe it for a friend)
A Good Friend (Define it for your friend)
Why I Am Going to School (Inform your teacher)

For middle and upper levels: My Experience in School (Describe it to the teacher)
Why I Care (or Don't Care) About Politics (Inform a friend)
New York: A Great City or a Disaster? (Persuade a foreigner it is one or the other)

4. What about objective tests?

There are a number of objective tests available for basic education programs which test for the student's ability to read and to identify or detect "errors" in standard English usage. These include: the Test of Adult Basic Education(TABE); the California Achievement Test (CAT); and the Stanford Tests of Academic Skills or the Stanford Achievement Tests. Although these tests measure reading and editorial skills, they do not measure a student's ability to compose. It is, therefore, recommended that such tests be used only in conjunction with a writing sample and appropriate skill prescription.

The writing sample alone yields most information needed, but if objective measures are desired, another possibility is to construct a teacher-made Diagnostic Test for Writing Skill which could include:

a. a section on ordering sentences to test for development and organization
b. a writing sample
c. an objective exercise of subject-verb agreement, use of "s" forms, and other mechanical concerns
d. a paragraph to punctuate, capitalize, and correct spelling

5. What about grading?

1. Grading, the conventional assignment of letters or numbers to a writing as an evaluative measure is not recommended for ABE student writers.
2. Grading needs to be played down, while fluency and frequent writing need to be encouraged.
3. Too often grades are used in a mystical way with neither teachers nor students really clear as to what constitutes a grade.
4. If grades are used, criteria should be determined with students for each letter or number equivalent.
5. Furthermore, only rewrites should be graded--not first drafts.

Student writing can be measured without grades by determining criteria for excellent, better, good, fair, or poor. Students' progress can be translated for them by individual conferences where teachers highlight the areas which need more work and those in which the student is already strong.

6. How can I guide students to respond to each other's papers?

Use student response groups frequently and use your own individual teacher response as a model. Guide students to: identify what they read or hear in terms of purpose, audience and form; analyze it for methods of development and ways it can be further developed; generalize what else could be done with it; and determine style.

By doing this, students focus on what can be learned from their own and their peers' writing; they also discover whether what they wrote was clearly expressed, how and why it was or was not, and how to make it better. Some student response group activities include the following:

a. In small groups of 3 or 4 they discuss student essays and establish criteria. (See appendix for sample response guidelines.)
b. Students devise and write their own questions about student essays they have read. These questions are then used to rewrite the papers.
c. Students summarize their feelings and thoughts about what they went through as they wrote something. They consider why they wrote it the way they did, and why they think the writing is effective or not.
d. Responses to students' writings can be organized on three levels; first, a general or descriptive one; then one which evaluates the quality of the style or form, and finally a third which criticizes the content.
e. Students read models of writings by published authors and discuss what works best and why.

Teacher response allows for a more personal dialogue. Guidelines need to be set for individual response such as the following:

a. Be positive and encouraging; use brief positive phrases.
b. Decide on set standards for correctness; what is more important. What are the teacher's writing values?
c. Make only one or a few comments per writing; focus on one kind of repetitive problem.
d. Use marginal comments and encourage students to make the corrections themselves.
e. Correct only for what students should be able to do at at a particular point or for what has been taught.
f. Don't be a judge; be a positive reinforcer, listener, and guide.

7. When evaluating papers throughout instruction, what should I do?

Do not "correct" papers for all errors. Where possible guide students, through questioning comments, to find their own errors. When you do "correct" only mark for one or two types of errors per writing. Calling attention to a few problems at a time is more digestible for students. Too many "corrections" tend to stifle and overwhelm them. "Correct" only for what has been taught over a period of time.

D. RESOURCE MATERIALS

It is recommended that all writing teachers read some materials relating to all phases of the writing process. The following bibliography is organized to facilitate a sampling of books or materials in each area including: Theory; Teaching Writing; Writing Activities; Mechanics; Revision; Evaluation and Supplementary Resources. (Starred items are especially recommended.)

THEORY

Britton, James, et al. The Development of Writing Abilities. New York: Macmillian, 1975 (paperback, NCTE)[1]

*Cooper, Charles, & Lee Odell. Research on Composing. NCTE, 1978.

Emig, Janet. The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders. Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1971.

Wheeler, Thomas. The Great American Writing Block. N.Y.: Viking, 1979.

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*Elbow, Peter. Writing Without Teachers. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

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Macrorie, Ken. Searching Writing, Telling Writing, and Writing To Be Read. Rochelle Park, N.J.: Hayden, 1980.

*Murray, Donald. A Writer Teaches Writing. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

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Trillin, Alice & Associates. Teaching Basic Skills in College. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1980.

Zinsser, William. On Writing Well. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.

SENTENCE DEVELOPMENT

O'Hare, Frank. Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing Without Formal Grammar Instruction. Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1973.

Rippon, Michelle & Walter Meyers. Combining Sentences. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979.

* Strong, William. Sentence Combining. New York: Random House, 1973.

[1]National Council of Teache of English

WRITING ACTIVITIES

*Barasovka, Joan. I Wish I could Write. Syracuse, N.Y.: New Readers Press 1978.

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"How to Read and Write Personal Letters & How to Read and Write Business Letters." Syracuse, N.Y.: New Readers Press, 1971.

*Kennedy & Rolder. Using Language Experience with Adults. Syracuse, N.Y.: New Readers Press, 1975.

Keller, R. & J. Friedland Writing For Life, Books 1 & 2, New York: Cambridge, 1980.

*Lesson Plans for the Remedial Writing Class In the High School. Brooklyn, N.Y.: NYC Board of Education, Curriculum Division, 1980.

*Moffett, James, & Betty Wagner. Student Centered Language Arts and Reading, K-13. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976.

*Writing Competently: A Handbook for Teachers. Brooklyn, N.Y.: NYC Board of Education, Curriculum Division, 1980.

*Writing Competently Across the Curriculum: A Handbook for Teachers in the Content Areas. Brooklyn, N.Y.: NYC Board of Education, Curriculum Division, 1980.

Writing Every Day Generates Excellence: A Manual for the Secondary School English Class. Brooklyn, N.Y.: NYC Board of Education, Curriculum Division, 1978.

Raimes, Ann. Focus on Composition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Sohn, David. Stop, Look,and Write Series. New York: Bantam, 1969.

Van Laan, Thomas & Robert Lyons. Language and the Newstand. New York: Scribners & Sons, 1968.

MECHANICS

Allen, R. & et al. Working Sentences. New York: Crowell, 1975.

*Barbe, Walter. Handwriting: Workbook: Cursive. Columbus, Ohio: Zaner-Bloser, 1977.

*Barsch, Jeffrey & Betty Creson. Spelling, Plus! Novato, CA: Academic Therapy Publications, 1980.

Deighton, Len. Vocabulary Development. New York: Teachers College New York: Teachers College Press 1959.

Rudolph, Orville & Evelyn. Haynes Giant Size Book 4: Practice Writing Series: Advanced Cursive Writing Drills. Wilkinsburg, PA: Hayes School Publishing, 1979.

REVISION

*Laubner, George. Proofreading Exercises. N. Billerica, MA: Curriculum Assoc., 1976.

EVALUATION

Cooper, Charles. R. & Lee Odell. Evaluating Writing. Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1977.

Healy, Mary K. Using Student Writing Response Groups in the Classroom. Berkeley, CA: Bay Area Writing Project, 1979.

Supplementary Resources

Some additional on-going sources for publication include:

Arizona English Bulletin (published 3 times per year). Department of English, Box 6032, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ 86011.

Bay Area Writing Project, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

Eric Clearinghouse in Reading and Communication Skills, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Ill. 61801.

Instructional Resource Center (CUNY), 535 East 80th St., New York (publications include Journal of Basic Writing, published 2 times per year, Resource, and CUNY Bibliography of Basic Skills).

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Ill. (Many excellent publications.)

Competency Based Adult Education Activities: Sample Activities, Ruston, La.: Louisiana Tech University, 1980.

Teachers and Writers Collaborative Publications, 4 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. (Publishes Teachers and Writers magazine three times a year, and other publications.)

Written Communication Series. Instructional Materials Laboratory, University of Missouri Columbia, Missouri 65211.

CONCLUSION

This writing skills curriculum is based on the belief that a competent adult learner is literate in writing, as well as in reading and computing. It, therefore, seeks to promote the need to plan for and integrate writing skills development into the ABE curriculum.

As has been stressed throughout this curriculum, writing needs to be taught as a thinking process, as a craft, and as a practical tool which has many uses. These goals can be achieved if writing instruction is begun right from the beginning, if ABE teachers have adequate preparation and training for teaching writing, and if writing is integrated into reading experiences.

This past decade has yielded much research which has influenced the way in which writing has been and will be taught. Much has yet to be done. As writing instruction continues, other skills areas will also be affected. Students and teachers will benefit from a shared, enjoyable language experience which promotes independent functioning and growth.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

TEACHING PLAN

SAMPLE FORMAT

OVERVIEW DESCRIPTION:	(2 or 3 sentences)
TEXT MATERIALS:	(Bibliographic list)
LEARNING OUTCOMES:	(List from simpler to more complex for appropriate levels)
WRITING ACTIVITIES	(List topically as they will be covered)
TOPICAL SEQUENCE	(Unit list, according to weeks or sessions)
(SUPPLEMENTARY:)	A section on method and criteria for evaluation could be included if it is appropriate, e.g., students will be expected to: (fill in criteria)

SAMPLE TEACHING PLAN

Course Name: Adult Basic Education Level 3: Carole's Writers' Community

Class Meetings: Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 9:00 - 1:00

Instructor: Carole Weinstein

Course Description: The Writing Workshop is designed to help students become more skillful in writing, to develop writing confidence, and to practice many forms of writing needed in daily life.

Text Materials:
Students' Writings
American Heritage Dictionary
Roget's Thesaurus
Supplementary Readers
Style Sheets

Learning Outcomes:

1. to develop a positive attitude toward writing
2. to construct and combine sentences
3. to compose and combine paragraphs
   a. to state main ideas
   b. to use details for development
   c. to use diverse methods for development
4. to use descriptive language
5. to use figures of speech
6. to summarize class lessons and readings
7. to think concretely
8. to think and write abstractly
9. to distinguish objective writing from subjective
10. to select themes and limit topics
11. to write for a specific purpose; to explain, to describe, to persuade, and to narrate
12. to adjust and control tone to different audiences (to use formal and informal language)
13. to develop a personal style
14. to write with various time limits
15. to develop standards for self criticism and revision of writing
16. to adapt various organization principles for different tasks
17. to maintain a clear focus throughout an essay
18. to organize ideas logically
19. to use resources, dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopedias, Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature

Writing Activities:

Writing activities will include sampling each of the following forms of writing:

- Lists
- Journals
- Memos and messages
- Letters
- Dialogue
- Essays
- Reports

Topical Sequence:

Each week we will focus on one of the following life areas and appropriate applications. The different forms of writing listed above will be practiced by applying them to practical needs.

Weekly Units:

	Practical Life Area	Application
Week 1	Health	Completing health insurance forms, writing about health
Weeks 2 & 3	Jobs and Job Searches	Resumes, application letters, reports
Week 4	Citizenship	Signing up to vote; writing about basic rights
Weeks 5 & 6	Financial Transaction	Applying for checking accounts, writing letters to a bank official
Week 7	Transportation	Writing directions
Weeks 8 & 9	Sustenance	Listing safety measures in the home
Week 10	Shelter	Completing rental applications, writing business letters
Weeks 11 & 12	Maintenance	Writing for information
Week 13	Consumer Education	Writing about buying practices and making lists

Note: All students will also keep a journal, recording their reactions or observations. Specific guidelines for keeping journals will be distributed. Additional writing activities will also be included, e.g., words, lists, note taking, and free writing.

Appendix B

1. GUIDE FOR CHECKING YOUR WORK

When you read your paper to revise it, you are proofreading your work. Make your changes in the following ways:

- Cross out any misspelled words or any word you wish to replace and write the new word above it.
- Put a slash (/) through a small letter that should be capitalized and through a capital letter that should be a small letter. Write the correct form above it.
- Add missing punctuation marks.
- Use a caret (^) to show where a word has been left out. Write the word above it.
- Cross out unnecessary words, phrases, and punctuation.
- Use a paragraph symbol (¶) to show where a new paragraph should start.
- Use periods to break up run-on sentences.
- Remove periods after groups of words that cannot stand alone. Add commas where necessary.

A useful way of practicing the procedures on this sheet is to copy a paragraph that needs corrections and to correct it. Specific checklists can also be devised which focus on more specific aspects of a writing.

2. SAMPLE GUIDELINES FOR READERS

1. What is the most important or significant sentence in the paper?
2. What do you like most about the paper?
3. What do you like least about it?
4. If you were writing the paper, what would you change and why?
5. Is the paper written for a particular audience?
6. Does it work?

3. RESPONSE GUIDELINES

After students have written ask them to pair up with a partner. Each person should read the other's writing and respond orally and/or in writing, guided by the following questions:

1. Is the language clear? Do you understand what the writer has written? Why or why not?
2. Who is the writing written for? Is the audience clear?
3. What is the purpose of the writing? Why has it been written?
4. What do you like most about it? Why?
5. What do you think needs to be improved?
6. What parts would you like to see developed more? How?
7. On a scale of from 1 - 6, what score would you give the paper?

Appendix C

SAMPLE CHARTS FOR READERS

Either one of the following charts can be used by groups of students when evaluating each other's papers. The first is to be used with the sample guidelines listed on page 67. The second can be used as an overall guideline reading chart.

READING CHART I

	Reader 1	Reader 2	Reader 3
Question 1			
Question 2			
Question 3			
Question 4			
Question 5			
Question 6			

READING CHART II

	Content	Mechanics	Style	Organization
Reader 1				
Reader 2				
Reader 2				

Note: Students can be guided to simply write comments in the appropriate boxes or to respond according to predetermined criteria.

Appendix D

SAMPLE FORMAT OF AN APPLIED WRITING

TASK: Students are to write an autobiographical essay in narrative form.

AUDIENCE: Another student

TIME REQUIRED: Dependent upon number of hours per session; at least three hours

MATERIALS: Paper, pencils, markers or crayons, with samples of autobiographical writing

PURPOSE: To narrate a meaningful experience in 100-200 words, depending on level

GENERIC SKILLS:
1. to construct complete sentences
2. to use punctuation for variety, emphasis
3. to take notes
4. to use descriptive language
5. to use conventional essay format
6. to compose paragraphs

Note: Low level students who may be unable to construct sentences can dictate their essay to another student or the teacher. The student can then proofread it and copy it.

Day 1 - Prewriting

Ask students to individually chart a line, circle, or bar graph or any other type of symbolic chart to indicate five major events in their lives. They are to draw an illustration for each event. Pair each student with a partner. Ask each couple to exchange papers. They read each other's charts. Distribute a question to each couple and ask them to interview each other about the following questions. (Each student is to take notes about the other's chart as they interview.)

1. Why did you pick the particular events you did?
2. Which event is the most important, then the least important?
3. Why did you draw the chart the way you did?
4. Which event would you like to write about?
   a. What could you say about it?
   b. Why is it important?

Each couple exchanges notes. They are to read and discuss the notes and use them the following day when they will return to write about the event in class.

Day 2 - Writing

Each member of the couple writes about his/her chosen event. They exchange papers. Each are read and discussed. The students are guided by the following questions:

1. What did you like most about the essay?
2. What do you think could use more work?
3. Did you understand the language? If not, what is not clear?
4. If you were to write this for another person to read, what would you change?

Each student takes the paper home for revision.

Day 3 - Revision and Discussion and Rewriting

Another version of the essay could be required writing for a different audience.

Appendix E

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Circle the number to the right of each statement that best describes your opinion about it.

1.	Writing cannot be taught.	1	2	3	4	5
		Disagree				Agree
2.	Writing is a skill anyone can learn.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Knowing grammar improves writing.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Studying grammar is a waste of time.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Creative writing will improve basic writing	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Good readers are good writers.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Writing is fun.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Bad readers are bad writers.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Writing is a born talent.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Writing is an art.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	A good teacher can teach writing.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Writing is best learned through exercise.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	The only way to learn to write is to write.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Writing is written for an audience, a purpose, and through a process	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Anyone who can read can write.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Students learn to write by imitating what they read.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix F

20 QUESTIONS

Handouts and questionnaires that deal with concerns in writing are useful. They help to broaden perspectives on studying writing.

10 Questions for the Learner:

1. What is writing
2. What is correct writing?
3. How do you go about writing?
4. What do you need help with?
5. What do you do well in writing?
6. What is the best way to learn writing?
7. How often should you write?
8. What kinds of writing should you do?
9. What should you do with your writing after you write it?
   Or, what do you hope will happen to your writing after you write it?
10. If you were teaching someone else to write, how would you do it?

10 Questions for the Teacher:

1. What is writing?
2. What is correct or good writing?
3. How can you provide consideration for all of your students' needs?
4. Do you teach mechanics? What? and how?
5. What writing activities are appropriate to your situation?
6. How can you create effective working groups?
7. What provisions do you need?
8. How can you provide consistent positive encouragement and response?
9. How can you consider all writing tasks in terms of process, purpose, and person?
10. If you were being taught writing skills, how would you want to be taught or directed?

Appendix G

SAMPLE CHARTS

A WORD A DAY (Your Guide To Personal Word Improvement)

Read something each day, the newspaper, a magazine, a book, etc.
Take from it at least one unfamiliar word.
Write the complete sentence in which you find the word.
Take an index card and chart it as follows:

Word:	Syllables:	Name of Word:
Original Sentence		
Dictionary Meaning		
Sentence Meaning		
Your Own Sentence		

Look up the word.
Write the meaning of it based on the sentence you found it in.
Write the name of the word. (How is it used? Is it a noun?)
Write a sentence containing the word.

WORD FORM CHART			
NOUN	VERB	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB
Writing	Write	Written	-
Caution	Caution	Cautious	Cautiously

Put your new word in the column it belongs.
Then try to write other forms of the same word, if there are any.

Appendix H

SAMPLE CHART

DEVELOPING YOUR OWN WRITING VOCABULARY

Ask students for words they need to know more about that they have seen, want to use, or have heard or read.

Help them make their own word lists under the following headings: educational list, occupational list, social list, or community life list.

Help them to draw the words from a context and then put them back into a context.

LIFE EXPERIENCE GLOSSARY			
Educational	Occupational	Social	Community Life

The contextually related Life Experience glossaries can either be integrated on one sheet or remain individual, e.g., a health glossary would contain words like medicine, prescription, doctor, etc.

Appendix I

WRITING GLOSSARY

The sequence of teaching these words should be to define them as they are introduced. Begin with WRITING.

Writing
Subject
Verb
Statement
Form
Style
Voice
Tone
Organization
Paragraph
Description
Narration
Exposition
Persuasion
Comparison
Contrast
Concept
Prewriting

Revising and Rewriting
Editing
Proofreading
Evaluation
Number
Agreement
Thought
Connotation
Denotation
Definition
Process
Audience
Purpose
Logic
Dialect
Standard Written English
Rhetoric
Discourse

Mechanics
Archaic
Formal
Informal
Coloquial
Slang
Dialect
Accent
Compound Word
Consonant
Consonant Cluster

Homophone
Prefix

Suffix
Syllable
Vowel

Index J

SAMPLE

Diagnosis and Prescription: Writing Skills (Student Form)

Distribute a guide for teachers like the following:

The Teachers' Directions

1. Administration

   a) Pre-test should be given during the first week a student is in class. Post-tests should be given at the time of reading post-tests.
   b) Allow students one hour. Remind them to leave time to look over their papers.
   c. Students may use a dictionary, but should receive no other help.

2. Rating - Essay should be read by two readers, three in case of conflict.

3. Diagnosis

   a) Circle number of correct category.
   b) Underline elements in category description which have particular relevance to this paper.
   c) In space beneath category, note additional elements, including strengths you have found in the paper.

4. Prescription

   a) Check off elements listed at left which seem most critical for this student.
   b) Write prescription, including the areas checked off and other elements as needed.

Writing Sample

0 - The student is unable to write.

_____

_____

_____

1 - The essay shows extreme lack of development. There is no paragraphing.
- The writer uses the simplest subject-verb structures or phrases.
- There is no coordination or subordination in sentences, and no awareness of tense or of singular and plural forms.
- Vocabulary, idiom, and spelling are poor. Some words are decipherable only from context. Punctuation and capitalization are random. Vocabulary is very limited.
- Length: Less than 50 words.

_____

_____

_____

2 - The essay shows an increasing level of development over 1. Attempts are made at coordination and subordination in sentences. The writer shows the beginnings of correct tense and singular and plural usage. The writer begins to use sentence boundary markers correctly.
- Spelling is still poor, and vocabulary still limited, but simple

idioms are attempted and are used logically.

- Length: 50 or more words.

3 - The essay shows an increasing level of development over 2. The essay shows the beginning of paragraph structure and has a topic and some supporting detail. The writer shows an awareness of simple sequence, e.g., chronological order or simple listing. There is an attempt at a concluding generalization.
- There is an increasing use of coordination and subordination in sentences.
- A greater variety of tense and verb forms are attempted.
- The essay shows the beginning of sentence variety and of transitions between sentences.
- Vocabulary and spelling begin to improve; there is a more flexible use of idiom.
- Length: 100 words.

4 - The topic is stated and some attempt is made at supporting details, examples or facts. Despite repetition or digression, there is a discernible sequence moving towards a conclusion. Paragraphing is erratic.
- The writer shows a poor sense of sentence boundaries. There may be irrelevant capitalization in middle of sentence, but sentences begin with capitals and end with periods.
- Weak standard English vocabulary. Misspelling of common words. Occasional incomprehensible syntax.
- Length: attempt at 200 words.

5 - The topic is stated. The writer has supported the topic with some details, facts or examples. There is a sense of sequence moving toward a conclusion, despite occasional repetition or digression. The writer has used paragraphing to support the sequence.
- The writer demonstrates some awareness of sentence boundaries; as well as verb tense and usage. There is no incomprehensible syntax.
- Spelling is readable although there are occasional misspelled common words. A standard English vocabulary is used. Sentences usually begin with a capital letter and end with a period.
- Length: 200 words.

6 - The essay has an introduction in which the topic is stated.
- The topic is supported by details, facts or examples.
- There is a sense of sequence, supported by adequate paragraphing.
- The writer shows a good awareness of sentence boundaries although there may be occasional fragments or run-on sentences.
- Spelling is readable. The writer shows a command of standard English idioms. Vocabulary is adequate to the topic. Syntax is decipherable and usage is generally standard English.
- Length: 200 or more words.

Prescription

handwriting
pre-writing
development and organization
sentence structure
grammar, punctuation, verb forms
usage, idiom, vocabulary
editing

Appendix K

STUDENT WRITING PUBLICATIONS: A RECOMMENDED LIST

Student publications are: a wonderful motivational device; an opportunity for students to see their work; a concrete goal; a learning device; a lesson in organization and conceptualization directly applied.

Some possibilities include the following:

1. A student guide to local attractions
2. A magazine (literary or otherwise)
3. A newsletter (simulated newspaper containing comics, recipes, essays, advice columns, autobiographies, etc.
4. Log books (class records of each day's activities)
5. A book of facts
6. A book of philosophical, psychological, or provocative sayings
7. A book of lists
8. A book of photo stories or photo essays
9. A collection of letters (e.g., of protest, persuasion, or other)
10. A poetry journal
11. A cookbook
12. A joke book
13. A riddle book
14. A mini-thesaurus

The specifics for each type of publication are varied, but each should reflect application of writing principles by containing the following:

1. A general focus (organized around a central theme)
2. A purpose (fulfill a need of the group)
3. A sense of audience (whom it is written for)
4. Format and layout (how it is developed and put together)
5. Illustrations (where appropriate use drawings or other visual aids or graphics)
6. Assigned roles (students can contribute in various ways as writers, editors, proofreaders, layout people, etc.)

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